EAST AND WEST INDIA SUGAR.

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EAST AND WEST INDIA SUGAR;

OR, A

REFUTATION

OF THE

CLAIMS

OF THE

WEST INDIA COLONISTS

TO A

Protecting Duty

ON

EAST INDIA SUGAR.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

With the exception of the opening paragraph, and a few brief sentences besides, the following sheets were written, about three months ago, chiefly for the information of some friends, in whose hands they were placed. The author was first led to the determination of publishing them by the recent appearance of a pamphlet entitled, " Observations on the Claims of the West-India Colonists to a Protecting Duty on East-India Sugar." That pamphlet, indeed, he will be frank enough to confess, he did not consider as requiring a reply, because it has conveniently furnished its own refutation. But the aims and intentions which it developes, on the part of those whose cause it advocates, and whose means of giving effect to their wishes,

experience has shown to be very formidable, appeared to him to be so injurious in their tendency, that he felt it to be his duty to attempt to enlighten the public respecting the real merits of the question at issue. How far he has succeeded in his object, he must leave it to his readers to decide.

London. January 29, 1823.

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APPENDIX.



EAST AND WEST INDIA SUGAR,

&c. &c.

DURING the last session of parliament, much discussion arose respecting the propriety of continuing the duty of 10*s.* per cwt. which, about eight years ago, had been granted as a protection for the sugars of the West Indies, against those of the East. As the subject is to undergo a full investigation in the approaching session, it may be convenient to collect together the various arguments which have been advanced by West Indians in favour of this duty, and to consider their validity. For, as the West Indians require that other parties should be subjected to injurious restrictions for their benefit, it is surely incumbent on them to prove that their claim is well founded. They have attempted to do so; whether

successfully or not it is my present object to ascertain. They have put upon record, indeed, no regular defence of this claim; but I have endeavoured to bring together all the scattered pleas in its favour, which were advanced either by their advocates in parliament, or in the course of the newspaper controversy which the question excited. In doing this, I have been anxious to omit no argument on which they themselves seemed to lay the smallest stress, and, at the same time, to place every part of their case in the strongest point of view.

Some of the arguments advanced by the West Indians, against the removal of the protecting duty, seem only to require to be stated, in order to show their fallacy. Of this class are the following:

1st. *The shipping interests of this country will suffer severely by any measure which shall destroy, or materially diminish, the Sugar-Trade of the West Indies. That Trade is one of our great nurseries of seamen, from which, in time of war, we draw the ready means of manning our navy. What a blow will be given to our mercantile marine, and even to our naval power, if this Trade should be annihilated!!*

2d. *The revenue raised on West-Indian Sugar amounts to the sum of nearly four millions.*

Can the country bear the pressure which must follow the loss of this productive source of national income, or even its reduction in any material degree?

3d. *The persons employed in the different labours and processes connected with the West-Indian Sugar-Trade would suffer severely from the change; whilst the large sums which have been expended in the erection of docks and warehouses in London and elsewhere, would all, or nearly all, be lost to the country.*

To these statements it is sufficient to reply, that either sugar is to be obtained on equal or cheaper terms from the East Indies or it is not. If it is not, then neither the West-Indian sugar-trade, nor the various interests connected with it, will be affected by the removal of the protecting duty. If sugar, however, may be procured on equal or on cheaper terms from the East Indies than from the West, it is obvious that, whatever quantity is brought from the former, it will require, from the greater length of the voyage, many more tons of shipping, and many more seamen to transport it. The same quantity of sugar will produce the same amount of revenue from whatever quarter it comes. It will, also, give employment to the same number of labourers, and the same extent of dock and warehouse room, as an equal

quantity brought from the West Indies. Nay, if it be true, as the West Indians argue, that sugar may be imported at a much cheaper rate from the East than from the West Indies, then, as the consumption of it would, in that case, inevitably increase, the different branches of national industry, which have been represented as exposed to ruin by the removal of the protecting duty, would, on the contrary, be materially benefited by the measure, whilst the revenue, also, would be proportionably improved.

With respect to the revenue, indeed, it might be shown, that, instead of gaining by the present system, it is subjected to considerable loss, in consequence of the preference given to West-Indian sugar by the legislature.

If, as the West Indians allege, the additional duty of 10*s*. a cwt. is insufficient to protect their sugars from the competition of British India, then it is obvious that, on the 150,000 tons of that article consumed in this country, from one million to a million and a half sterling more is directly paid out of the pockets of the British consumers than would be paid if East-Indian sugars were freely admitted. A part of this sum, therefore, if not the whole, might, without detriment to the community, be added to the revenue. But, besides this, on every cwt. of sugar exported in a refined state, a bounty of 6*s*. 3*d*. per cwt. is allowed, under the name of drawback, to enable the West

Indians to carry the surplus of their sugars to foreign markets. The drawback, that is to say, is so regulated as to amount to 33*s.* 3*d.* on each cwt. of Muscovado sugar that has been refined, although the duty paid upon it was only 27*s.* A further loss, therefore, of 6*s.* 3*d.* is incurred by the revenue on every cwt. of sugar exported in a refined state.

The great argument, however, which has hitherto been relied upon to justify the protection granted to West-Indian sugar, has been this:—*The West Indies are subjected to the restrictions of the colonial system, from which the East Indies are free: the protecting duty is no more than a fair and just compensation for this disadvantage.*

This was the only argument which I can discover to have been employed by Mr. Vansittart, when, in November, 1813, he first proposed to parliament to impose this protecting duty; and it appears to have been that on which its advocates, at the time, exclusively relied. Even as late as the session of 1821, it was stated by Lord Liverpool, to a deputation of East-Indian merchants, that the ground on which he deemed it to be an act of justice to the West Indies to continue this protection was, that *they* were subject to restrictions from which India was free.

Now, I am far from denying that, previous to

the last session of parliament, there was considerable weight in this argument; and justice certainly would have required, not, indeed, that the protecting duty should be continued, but that, in repealing it, there should be a repeal, at the same time, of the restrictions under which the general commerce of the West Indies had been placed. In point of fact, however, these restrictions have been removed during the last session of parliament; but then they have been removed without the repeal, nay, without any diminution, but rather with an extension of the protecting duty, which had previously been justified mainly, if not solely, on the ground of these restrictions.

The West Indians, however, deny that all restrictions have been removed. To this it may be sufficient to reply, that if any still remain which tend, in the slightest degree, to place the trade of the West Indies under disadvantages from which other parts of His Majesty's dominions are exempt, the just and obvious course would be to remove the remaining restrictions, and not to inflict compensatory imposts on other branches of commerce.

But what are precisely the restrictions which continue to fetter the trade of the West Indies, as compared with that of the East Indies?

With respect to *shipping*, in the first place, the advantage is on the side of the former. Vessels built in the West Indies are entitled to all the

privileges of British Registry. Vessels built in India are denied this privilege.

A free intercourse is now admitted, not only in British shipping (which term includes West-Indian shipping), but in the shipping of the United States, of the South-American Republics, of Brazil, and of the different foreign colonies, French, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, and Swedish, in the West Indies, between our own West-Indian Colonies and the different foreign possessions to which the ships respectively belong. The ships, thus freely trading, may import into our West Indies almost all articles which can be brought thence with advantage; and they may also export to those different foreign possessions, all articles which are either of the growth of our own colonies, or have been previously imported into them from any other quarter.

The intercourse is also free and unrestrained, in British shipping, between the West Indies and our own North-American Colonies, and between colony and colony in the West Indies. From this branch of trade, however, the East Indies are at present excluded.

British-built ships, including, as has been remarked, West-Indian shipping, may, also, trade freely between the West Indies and all parts of Europe and Africa, carrying thither colonial produce, and bringing thence all articles which do not directly interfere with the staple manufac-

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tures of Great Britain. Salted provisions seem to form the single other material exception to the freedom of import, from these quarters of the globe, which is allowed to the West Indies.

In the case of the East Indies, this intercourse may take place, under certain regulations, not in British ships only, but in ships of all nations; the goods, however, which foreign ships import, being subject to higher duties than if they had been brought in British vessels.

The intercourse between the East Indies and Great Britain is liable to restrictions on East-Indian shipping, to which West-Indian shipping, from its being entitled to British registry, is not liable. But the restrictions which operate most disadvantageously on the East-Indian trade, are the higher duties imposed on the introduction of East-Indian produce into this country. West-Indian coffee, for example, pays an excise-duty of 1*s.* per lb. while East-Indian coffee pays a duty of 1*s.* 6*d.* per lb. But the overwhelming disadvantage, under which East-Indian commerce labours, is the protecting duty granted to West-Indian sugar of 10*s.* per cwt.—sugar being an article which, it may be shown, is so essential to the growth and prosperity, nay, to the very maintenance of the trade between Great Britain and India, that if this heavy impost is continued, that trade must not only be prevented from increasing, but it must be greatly cramped

and diminished. And while our commerce with British India is necessarily narrowed by these restrictions on the import of her raw produce, we refuse to admit a large proportion of her manufactured goods to consumption at all in this country, and the rest only on paying a duty, which is, in fact, prohibitory, and which varies from £37 : 10*s.* to £67 : 10*s.* per cent. *ad valorem.* We, at the same time, import our own rival manufactures into India, at a low duty of only 2½ per cent. *ad valorem.*

British manufactures, I admit, must go direct from Great Britain to the West Indies; while, into the East Indies, they may be imported circuitously, paying, however, double duties when imported in foreign ships. But it is impossible to regard this difference as affording any advantage to India. British manufactures must, necessarily, be supplied cheapest in British ships and by direct communication; there can, therefore, be no temptation to adopt a foreign or a circuitous conveyance. There is, in fact, no real nor intended benefit in the permission to do so. It seems to be the fortuitous effect of the peculiar circumstances of India, but it can have no practical results in the way of comparative advantage to the trade of that country. British freights and British manufactures being cheaper than the freights or manufactures of any other country, it is no real hardship on the West

Indians to be confined to them, nor is it of the slightest benefit to the East Indians to be relieved from the restriction.

On the whole, it is clear than no argument can be founded on the comparative advantages of the East-Indian system of commerce over that of our West-Indian possessions for continuing the protecting duty on sugar. At the same time, if it can be shown that the West Indies are still subjected to restrictions which are attended with any disadvantage whatever, the proper course, as I have already observed, is to remove them, and to this course no East Indian would be disposed to prefer the slightest objection.

Another argument employed by the West Indians in support of their claim is of this kind:—*A preference,* they say, *has been granted for a very great length of time to West-Indian sugars: they possess, by prescription, an exclusive right to the supply of the home market, which it would be unjust to disturb.*

It is true that the sugars of our own possessions have generally had a preference given to them over foreign sugars, but not over those of British India. The preference given to West-Indian over East-Indian sugars dates only from the year 1814, and cannot therefore be considered as furnishing any very solid foundation for this

claim of a prescriptive right. In the year 1787, the duties on sugar stood thus: there was chargeable, on West-Indian brown, 12*s.* 4*d.* per cwt.; on West-Indian white, 29*s.* per cwt.; on East-Indian sugar, of whatever quality, £37 : 16 : 3 per cent. *ad valorem*, being the duty to which all unenumerated articles imported from India (sugar being one of these) was liable. But even then, supposing the average price of sugar to have been 40*s.* per cwt. this would have afforded little protection to West-Indian sugars. It would have been a duty of only 15*s.* 1½*d.* per cwt. on East-Indian sugars of all qualities.

In 1791, West-Indian brown sugar became chargeable with a duty of 15*s.* per cwt.; that on West-Indian white being raised to 31*s.* 8*d.*; the duty on East-Indian sugar continuing as before.

In 1797, the duty on brown West-Indian sugar was raised to 17*s.* 6*d.* and that on white to 34*s.* 2*d.* East-Indian sugars of all qualities continued to be charged with the *ad valorem* duty of £37 : 16 : 3 per cent. to which an addition was this year made of 2*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. apparently with the view of making the duty to correspond to the rise in the duties on West-Indian sugars.

In 1803, a remarkable change of system took place, and East-Indian sugar, instead of being made to pay as before an *ad valorem* duty, was subjected to a duty of 22*s.* per cwt. upon all qualities, whether brown or white. At the same

time, the duty on the brown sugar of the West Indies was raised to 20*s*. per cwt. and that on the white sugar of the West Indies was reduced to 23*s*. 4*d*. per cwt. If any preference, therefore, was then intended by the legislature to be given to the West-Indian sugars, it was one of a very unimportant kind. In point of fact, the arrangement was probably favourable to the sugars of India, these being chiefly of the finer descriptions. What makes this arrangement the more remarkable is, that it was adopted with a clear perception on the part of the West Indians of its nature and bearings. A variety of documents may be adduced to prove this, but particularly a report of the Assembly of Jamaica, drawn up about that time, in which the danger to West-Indian interests of admitting East-Indian sugars to home consumption is exposed at great length and with evident anxiety. (See Appendix A.)

But what effect had the alarms and remonstrances of the West Indians of that day on the legislature? Did parliament then recognise this claim of theirs to the exclusive supply of the British sugar-market? Far from it. On the contrary, in the year 1809, when the sugar-duties came again under the consideration of parliament, what did parliament do? It imposed on West-Indian brown sugar a duty of 30*s*. per cwt.; on West-Indian white a duty of 35*s*. per cwt.; and on East-Indian sugar of all qualities a duty of 33*s*.

per cwt.; an arrangement, like the former, which was still, upon the whole, probably in favour of East-Indian sugar.

On the occasion of making this arrangement, considerable discussion took place, not on the propriety of granting to West-Indian sugar a protecting duty against East-Indian sugar, (this seemed not to be made a question at that time,) but on the propriety of admitting the sugars of the French islands, which were then in possession of Great Britain, to the home market, on equal terms with the sugars of our own colonies. The principal advocate for this measure was Mr. Marryat. His speech on the occasion is well worthy of consideration. It is given at full length, evidently under his own revision, in the Appendix to the fourteenth volume of Cobbett's Parliamentary Register, page lxxviii. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is the most able argument I have seen in favour of the free admission of East-Indian sugars to the home market. Indeed, so perfectly conclusive does it appear to be, and more especially as a refutation of that very plea of prescription which we are now considering, that I shall insert nearly the whole of it, in the Appendix to the present pamphlet (B). And if the reader, in going over the speech, will only take the trouble to substitute British India for the conquered colonies of France, he will find the

speaker's arguments wonderfully strengthened by the substitution.

And certainly the conduct of the legislature in other instances fully justified the reasoning of Mr. Marryat on this occasion.

No sooner was Dutch Guiana conquered by His Majesty's arms, in 1796, and the island of Trinidad, in 1797, than the market of Great Britain was thrown open to their produce, on the same terms on which the produce of our own colonies was admitted. No opposition whatever appears to have been made to this measure on the part of the West Indians.

In 1805, when the Dutch colonies in Guiana were re-occupied by this country, their produce was again freely admitted on equal terms with that of the British islands, although they were, in the strictest sense of the word, *foreign* colonies. The same course was pursued with respect to the conquered colonies of Denmark.

Now, if a claim to the prescriptive right of exclusively supplying Great Britain with sugars could be preferred at all, it could only be preferred by our own old colonies. But they appear not to have even thought of such a right, when the dangerous and ruinous rivalry of Dutch Guiana and Trinidad commenced. Then was the time for them to have urged this plea. And, had they urged it with success, they would un-

doubtedly have prevented much of the distress of which they have since so loudly complained; and they would have saved the lives of many thousands of human victims, who have been sacrificed in converting the swamps of Guiana and the forests of Trinidad into sugar-plantations.

Why was the right, for which they now contend, waved on that occasion? Were the West Indians blind to the consequences of waving it? It is impossible to suppose it. Or was it because, the conquered colonies being cultivated by slaves, a fellow feeling and sympathy existed between the parties, which led our old colonists to forego their just claims to monopoly in favour of their new associates, though they are to be made good against the free labourers of British India? On what ground was it that they admitted the sugars of Demerara and Berbice, of Trinidad and St. Croix, to the home-market, but that they would now exclude from it the sugars of Hindostan? Is not this a partiality of the most monstrous and unjustifiable description? What then are the titles to this indulgence which Dutch Guiana, for example, had to prefer, and which have proved so efficacious in its favour, and which are not, at least, equally possessed by British India? None, that I know of, can be pointed out which the latter does not possess in a still higher degree but this, that the sugar

of the former is cultivated by slaves, that of the latter by freemen.

The first instance we meet with of the assertion of this claim of prescription, was in the case of the exclusion from the home-market of the sugars of the French conquered colonies in 1809. But even then no attempt was made to impose a similar restriction on the sugars of British India. West Indians explain this fact by alleging that, while the East-India Company had the monopoly of the trade of Asia, they relied on the supineness of that body to preserve them from being injured by the competition of East-Indian sugar; and that on this account, and this account alone, they had not earlier demanded protection against it. But why did they not demand protection against Dutch Guiana and Spanish Trinidad, rivals which have proved more detrimental to them than India was then likely to become, but which were finally installed in all the privileges of British sugar colonies in the same session of parliament, which imposed an almost prohibitory duty on the sugars of British India?

It ought to be observed, however, that this attempt of the West Indians to explain their conduct rests on no ground of authority, certainly not on any proceeding of the legislature; and it is contradicted by the Jamaica report already referred to. But even if it were true that such was the view which influenced the West-Indian

body, this would not at all invalidate the fact that, down to the year 1814, the sugars of the West Indies were not protected, in the market of Great Britain, against those of the East.

But then, at the close of the year 1813, it is alleged, the legislature took the whole of this subject into its deliberate consideration and arranged it on a footing which was intended to be permanent. On the renewal of the East-India Company's Charter in that year, the trade with Hindostan being thrown open, it was deemed a measure of strict justice to the West Indians to guard them against the effect of an influx of East-Indian sugar, by laying on that article a duty of 10*s*. a cwt. over and above what was chargeable on West-Indian sugar.

It may be here desirable to take a brief review of the circumstances under which this protecting duty was imposed.

The act which threw open the trade of Hindostan was passed towards the close of the session of 1812-1813. During the lengthened discussions to which that measure gave birth, not a word appears to have been said on the subject of East-Indian sugar. The act was allowed to pass without any change in the relative footing on which the sugars of the East and West Indies had been placed in 1809. Indeed, so far was Parliament from then appearing to entertain any idea of the exclusive right of our

own West-India colonies to supply sugar for the home-market, that, in May, 1813, while the East-India Bill was still pending, an act passed for admitting the sugars of Martinique, and some other islands, to consumption in Great Britain at an additional duty of only 5*s*. a cwt. This measure was acceded to by the West-Indian body generally. Mr. Marryat alone objected to it. He proposed that these foreign sugars should be admitted on *equal* terms with British plantation sugars, and strenuously supported that proposition.

It was not till the following session, that of 1813–1814, that any change was made in the duties on East-Indian sugar. A correspondence had passed privately on the subject between Mr. Charles Ellis, on the part of the West-Indian body, and the Chairman of the Committee of Liverpool Petitioners for opening the Trade to India, in which the latter consented to the imposition of an additional duty of 10*s*. a cwt. on East-Indian sugars. It does not appear how far either the Liverpool petitioners or the East-Indian merchants of London were consulted on this occasion. But, it is understood, that the only persons who took any active part in compromising the interests involved in this question, were themselves considerable growers of West-Indian sugar. In consequence of this compromise, a resolution was moved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on

the 26th November, 1813, imposing a duty of 10*s*. a cwt. on East-Indian sugar over and above what was payable on West-Indian sugar. Mr. Fawcett alone appears to have made the slightest objection to the measure. But the only report of his speech which reached the public was comprised in the following words: " Mr. Fawcett made some remarks, which were not heard." The only person besides who appears to have broken the general silence was Mr. Marryat. He is stated, in the newspapers of the day, to have said, among other things, that the West Indians were entitled to a decided preference, *on account of the restrictions under which they laboured, and to which India was not subject*; that the West Indians had been considerable losers during the last twenty years, and *there were few estates there which in that time had not been sold or given up to creditors*; that the present was the only measure favourable to them which had yet been proposed; and that he trusted it would not be broken in upon.

The measure passed both Houses without any farther discussion, and no notice whatever appears to have been taken of the subject out of Parliament.

Scarcely had this additional duty been imposed on East-Indian sugar, when, in April, 1814, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, and Parliament adopted, without any discussion, a

resolution to admit to home consumption the sugars of all the French colonies then in our possession, and of St. Eustatia, St. Martin, and Saba, at the same duties precisely which were payable on British plantation sugar. Thus, in the same session, the sugars of foreign slave colonies were admitted to home consumption on equal terms with our own, and the sugars grown by freemen in British India were loaded with imposts intended to be prohibitory. I do not pretend to account for measures so strangely capricious and inconsistent. But is there not reason to apprehend that those whose counsels were allowed on this occasion to influence the decisions of Government, were not entirely exempt from a certain sympathy with the growers of sugar by slave labour, and a corresponding dread of the competition of sugar the produce of free labour?

But whether this suspicion be well or ill founded, it will hardly be alleged, after the above details are duly considered, that, in the proceedings adopted in 1813–1814, there was any such compact entered into as binds either the Parliament or the people of England to confirm the protecting duty on East-Indian sugar. On the contrary, the whole affair wears much the air of an unauthorized arrangement, which was suffered to pass into a law from mere ignorance or inadvertence on the part of those who were chiefly

interested in opposing it. In no case could such a transaction be pleaded in bar of the rights of India and of Great Britain. Still less can it be available when the only plea on which it even then rested, the restrictive system of our colonies, has been obviated.

But if it were conceded that a compact meant to be permanent was then entered into by which a protecting duty of 10*s*. on East-Indian sugar was permanently secured to the West Indians, the compact should at least be held binding on both parties, and those in whose favour it had been made should be the last to violate it. It was, however, the West Indians by whom the arrangement was first sought to be disturbed. They demanded, and, it is rumoured, mean still to demand, an increase of this protecting duty; and they have thus thrown the whole question open for renewed deliberation and discussion.

It is not, however, by any means deemed necessary that the legislative arrangement of 1813–1814 should have been first disturbed by the West Indians, to justify an effort for its repeal. It is perfectly sufficient, in this and every similar case, to be in a capacity to show that an existing law is unjust in its provisions, and injurious in its tendency to the public interest, in order to induce a revision of it. That such is the case with respect to the law which imposes a protecting duty of 10*s*. on East-Indian sugars is what, I believe, may

be satisfactorily established; and, if so, every principle of sound legislation will call for its repeal.

But before we quit this part of the subject, I would ask on what ground it is that this claim of prescription is to be confined to the produce of the sugar-cane? Why has it not been extended to cotton, to indigo, and to other articles, the growth of tropical climates? The mischievous effects which would have attended such an extension of it are rendered indeed very plain and palpable in the cases of cotton and indigo. No one will deny that the most beneficial results have been produced, to the interests of the community at large, by freely admitting these articles, whether grown in the West or in the East Indies, to an equal participation of the home market. It cannot be doubted that similar advantages would arise from the free admission of East-Indian sugar.

I shall make only one remark more under this head. Had there been the slightest weight in this plea of prescription, the slave-trade ought not to have been abolished, nor ought the East-India Company's monopoly to have been taken away. The very Acts of Parliament which favour most strongly the claim of the West Indians, are Acts of Parliament giving encouragement to the slave-trade.

It is further alleged, that "*Great Britain has encouraged the cultivation of sugar in the West Indies; that the faith of Parliament has been pledged for their protection; that the attempt to deprive them of that protection is an attack on the vested rights of West Indians; and that, therefore, on the simple ground of* JUSTICE, *they are entitled to the continuance of a protecting duty against East-Indian sugars.*

But here it ought, in the first place, to be distinctly specified for what part of the West Indies this imposing plea is advanced? Is it intended to comprehend only the colonies we possessed prior to the seven years' war, namely, Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Bermudas, Barbadoes, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, and the Virgin Islands? Or does it include Grenada, and the Grenadines, St. Vincent, and Dominica, ceded to us in 1763? Or does it extend also to Trinidad, ceded in 1802, and to Tobago, which, after changing masters several times, was finally ceded to us in 1814? Again, does it comprehend Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, colonies which have been British only since 1814? Let us at least know the precise limits of the claim, and the grounds on which it is founded. Does it rest on length of possession, or is it that slavery is so desirable an institution in itself, that, wherever

it exists, it is entitled to peculiar favour and protection? At present, at least, no distinctions are made, or even hinted at, by the claimants. The old colonies in the West Indies have fraternized with the new; they have entered into an alliance for their common defence against the presumptuous claims of every British possession which lies to the east of the Cape of Good Hope;—for the common defence, as it would seem, (with one exception, which it is not easy to account for, that of the Mauritius,) of slave cultivation against free cultivation. Frenchmen and free men seem the only objects on which they exercise their right of exclusion. Or is the Mauritius excluded from this (we will not call it unholy) league, as being a kind of advanced post in the way to that especial object of their hostility, British India?

It may, however, be further asked, why this plea is confined to the sugar-planters?* Is not this unfair to some of the members of their own alliance? The Bahamas, for example, cultivated only cotton. Had they not the same right to protection with Jamaica? And why should more deference be paid to the claims of the sugar-planters in all the islands, who form only about two-thirds of the whole proprietary, than to those of the growers of other tropical productions?

* Coffee, though also loaded with a protecting duty, can hardly, as yet, be said to be a staple production of British India.

The decision of the question in the case of cotton and indigo turned, it is manifest, not on the reality or groundlessness of any such absurd plea as is now advanced, but on the general interests of the community; and on that ground must the present question also be decided.

But " encouragement has been given to the cultivation of the West Indies." Without doubt it has. Encouragement was also given to the agriculture of England before its union with Scotland, and to the agriculture of Great Britain before its union with Ireland. But was that deemed a valid reason for making invidious distinctions between the subjects of the same united kingdom? On the contrary, has it not been the *just* and enlightened policy of the legislature to approximate as rapidly as possible to an absolute inter-community of commercial rights and privileges between every part of it?

On the same ground, we presume, it was that the conquered and ceded sugar colonies, with the recent and occasional exception of French colonies, were so readily admitted to a free and equal participation of the British market. But on what principle is British India to be excluded from the operation of the same liberal policy? She has been British much longer than one half of our West-Indian colonies:—Bengal, the great grower of sugar, has been British since 1765.

When the West Indians speak so largely of

solemn compacts, of the faith of Parliament being pledged to them, of the protection promised to them, of the vested rights they have acquired to a monopoly of the sugar market, and of the JUSTICE which is due to them, it is very difficult to affix any meaning to the terms. In fact, they are but using up the very weapons which they wielded, for a time, but too successfully, in defence of the slave-trade, but which, I apprehend, are now too well appreciated to serve the same purposes of delusion. The very terms of the former controversy (the result of which, nevertheless, they affect to praise, though it was their own defeat) are now servilely copied. The very same Acts of Parliament will, doubtless, be again conjured up in formidable array; and, with slight alterations, the speeches and pamphlets of the former period, drawn from the lumber rooms of their publishers, will again be put into requisition: on the topic now under consideration, they will be found particularly fruitful of fact and argument.

But to return: when and where, I would ask, was the faith of Parliament pledged, and the kind of protection which they claim promised to them? What are the vested rights of which they speak, and how have they been acquired, and where are their muniments deposited? Can they exhibit proof of a vested right to be paid by the people of this country, already groaning

under their burthens, a million and a half more for their sugar than it is worth? Or, can they show a vested right to oblige the people of Great Britain to sustain, by that and other costly sacrifices, in all its rigour and deformity, the system of colonial bondage, which pollutes the character, while it deteriorates the moral feelings of the community?

Precisely the same plea, which we are here combating, might have been used with far more propriety and truth on a variety of occasions on which, happily for Great Britain, it has been wholly disregarded and contemned.

I have already alluded to the slave-trade. It had received the encouragement of innumerable Acts of Parliament; nay, of many of the very same Acts to which we shall probably be now referred. It was considered as worthy of the highest legislative and diplomatic protection. It was held with so firm a grasp, that when Virginia, in 1773, represented to Parliament the various evils which attended the continued importation of Africans into that state, and implored its prohibition, the proposal was indignantly rejected as at variance with our commercial interests.

But, all this notwithstanding, the slave-trade has been abolished; and it has now become, in this country at least, the object of universal execration. Even those who fought its battles, with the most determined pertinacity for twenty years,

can now speak of its abolition as a wise and salutary measure. And how was this extraordinary revolution effected? By examination, inquiry, evidence. It was narrowly investigated, and found to be cruel and unjust: it was convicted of radical and incurable injustice. On that occasion, the West Indians united with the slave-traders in clamouring against the abolition of the slave-trade, as an act of the grossest injustice to them, precisely in the same way in which they now clamour against the abolition of the protecting duty on sugar. But their clamours proved ineffectual for any purpose but that of delay. The good sense of the people of England led them to see that if it was unjust to tear Africans, by force or fraud, from their native land, and to doom them and their posterity for ever to slavery in the West Indies, it could not possibly be unjust to prohibit this from being done. They refused to be deluded by the cobweb-sophistries of the slave-traders and slave-holders, and they abolished the trade.

Now, does not precisely the same reasoning apply to the present case? If it can be shown, as it is proposed to be, in the course of this inquiry, that the protecting duty is unjust towards the people of India and the people of England, involving consequences exceedingly injurious to their rights and their interests, then we may confidently affirm that, even if indemnity

were due, yet no counter-plea of justice can be truly alleged for its continuance. A general claim for indemnity, indeed, was advanced, in the case of the abolition of the slave-trade, but none was actually given, because it was never shown, by any individual, that indemnity was due to him. Indemnity may, possibly, be said to be due to the West Indians on the present occasion. In that case, let it be claimed; let the nature and grounds of the claim be fully and fairly investigated, and let it be met with equity, and even liberality. To this they are entitled, but to nothing more. They have no more right to claim the continuance of a protecting duty on sugar, to the manifest wrong of India and of Great Britain, than they had before a right to claim the continuance of the slave-trade, to the manifest wrong of Africa.

Another marked exemplification of the principle here contended for is to be found in the measure for putting an end to the exclusive privilege of the East-India Company, and throwing open the trade of Hindostan. The plea which the Company had to urge for the continuance of their monopoly was infinitely stronger than any thing which can now be urged in behalf of the West-Indian monopoly. They actually enjoyed what the West Indians only fancy they enjoy. Their monopoly was admitted. They displayed, therefore, in defence of their claims, and good right

they had to do so, the antiquity of their prescription; their vested interests; their oft-renewed charters; the encouragement derived from legislative enactments; the capital they had invested in establishments of various kinds at home and abroad, free from all expense to the parent-state; their vast contributions to the revenue; their splendid services and triumphs; the blaze of glory their achievements had thrown around their country; the happiness they had communicated to their Indian subjects; and a thousand other pleas which form a singular contrast with the present case. To throw open the trade, they affirmed, would be gross injustice, whilst it would lead to irreparable evils of various kinds.

All these pleas were listened to; they were investigated; they were refuted. The question of right and justice was found to be against the Company, and they were deprived of their monopoly. In that case, the *just* claims of India and of Great Britain were admitted to outweigh all that could be alleged on the other side. The pretence of countervailing claims of justice, on the part of the Company, was held to be inadmissible as a bar to the acknowledged rights of the community at large. The Company, indeed, were left at liberty to make out a case for indemnity, and we were led to expect that an immense loss would have been exhibited, on their part, as a foundation for such a claim; but, from the time that the

conflict was over, and the irritation of it had subsided, nothing more has been heard on this subject.

Similar cases might be multiplied. The legislature had prohibited the intercourse of our West-Indian islands with the United States, for the express purpose, among others, of giving encouragement to the produce of the British North American colonies. An enlarged view of the national interests has led to a complete change of system in this respect. At the urgent solicitations of the West Indians themselves, the encouragement which for years had been given to our North American colonies has been suddenly withdrawn, and the market of the West Indies opened to the produce of the United States.—In like manner, after encouraging the timber-trade of Canada, in opposition to the timber-trade of the Baltic, until it had been nourished up to a trade of immense extent, the policy which loaded the Baltic timber with a protecting duty has been found to be erroneous, because detrimental to the interests of the community at large; and, notwithstanding the injury arising from its abolition to the individuals who, *on the faith of parliament*, had embarked in the timber-trade of Canada, that protecting duty has been repealed.—Nay, our very navigation-laws, on the faith of which our ship-builders and dock-owners had embarked their property, which were deemed to be a part of our legislative system that was absolutely immutable,

and with which our commercial greatness and our maritime superiority were supposed to be closely bound up, being proved, in their rigour, to be inconsistent with the national interests, have been made to give way. In spite of all the legislative encouragement, in spite of the faith of parliament, in spite of the promised protection which our ship-owners, and ship-builders, and dock-masters, and all the classes depending upon them, had to plead, the navigation-laws have been largely relaxed, and will, probably, undergo still more extensive relaxations.

A repeal of the protecting duty on East-Indian sugar would, say the West Indians, be gross injustice to them. It is unjust, that is to say, that twenty millions of men in Great Britain and Ireland should have leave to buy sugar where they can buy it cheapest, and that one hundred millions of British subjects in India should have leave to bring their sugar to those twenty millions of consumers, lest the gains of a few West-Indian planters should be diminished. Why should these one hundred and twenty millions of men be denied this advantage? For no reason but that the West-Indian planters may be benefited at their cost. But this, as has been well observed,* is the plea

* See an admirable paper on this subject in a periodical work called the "Inquirer," (No. ii. p. 251,) printed for Longman and Co.

of all injustice, the object of all oppression. One man wishes to reap such and such an advantage at the cost of many others. The few require to benefit at the expense of the much greater number. Thus precisely stands the present question. Let the West Indians show wherein their case differs, in principle, from all the other unjust monopolies and commercial oppressions which have ever existed.

Another argument employed by the West Indians for perpetuating the protecting-duty is this: — *A vast amount of capital is embarked in the cultivation of the West Indies, which will be lost if this duty be withdrawn.*

An argument of precisely the same kind, without any variation, was employed by the West Indians to prevent the British parliament from abolishing the slave-trade. It proved, then, a very captivating and imposing argument, and for a time served its purpose. But in the teeth of it the slave-trade was abolished, and no West Indian has since come forward to state a case of dilapidated or ruined capital in consequence of that measure: on the contrary, it may be shown that the ruin of the West Indies would only have been accelerated had their plea been attended to. This circumstance is not a *proof* that there is nothing in the present argument. It furnishes,

however, a ground of suspicion that it may have little real weight. On the occasion of the abolition of the slave-trade, it is believed that there was .only one, even of the slave-traders, who preferred a claim for compensation; although, previous to the abolition, the total ruin was predicted, with absolute confidence, of all concerned in the traffic in England and in Africa. Especially was the ruin of Liverpool predicted, in case "that valuable trade, the main source of its prosperity," and occupying such a mass of its capital, should be lost to it.

But is it clear that the proposed measure would involve any loss of capital, and if any, to what amount? This is a point for examination.

It must be admitted, that immense sums of British capital have been sunk in the West Indies. Into Jamaica alone, since its conquest, when there were in it about 40,000 slaves, not less than 850,000 Africans have been imported, making a total of 890,000, exclusive of all the births which have taken place during that period. And yet, at the present moment, the slave-population of the island does not exceed 345,000. What an immense sacrifice of capital is here! No fewer than 545,000 slaves, more than now exist there, have been imported into this single island, who must have cost a mass of British capital, equal to at least from 15 to 20 millions; and, at the price at which slaves are now valued, would

amount to more than double that large sum. For this enormous loss of capital, however, we presume there is no claim to be preferred. It is rather for Jamaica to account for so great a waste of life no less than of property.

Vast sums of capital have, moreover, been irretrievably sacrificed in various other ways,—in extravagant speculations, bad debts, &c. &c. No claim, it is also presumed, is intended to be drawn from these sources of past loss. Nothing more can be meant by the argument under consideration than that the value of the property now actually invested in West-Indian sugar-cultivation would be deteriorated or lost by East Indian competition. But of what does that property consist? It consists of land, houses, furniture, implements of husbandry, cattle, and slaves.

If we suppose that the consequence of the proposed measure of removing the protecting duty would be even to put an entire period to the growth of sugar in the West Indies, how would these different items of property be affected by it? We will assume that two-thirds of the land, as well as two-thirds of all the other descriptions of property, including slaves and cattle, are embarked in the culture of sugar. The land so employed would remain, and would be applicable to other purposes: it could be applied to none, according to the statements of West Indians themselves, which would yield less profit than sugar

is now yielding, or has generally yielded: their own reports for the last thirty years may be quoted in proof of this: from them it appears (see Appendix C) that it is absolutely yielding no profit whatever. The same may be said of the slaves and the cattle. The numerical amount of the slave-population would not be diminished merely by a change of employment from growing sugar, for example, to growing provisions and other articles. Nay, the probability is, that the slaves would increase rather than diminish if their labour were lessened and their food augmented, as they would be by such a change.

These three items of capital, the land, the cattle, and the slaves, may, perhaps, be estimated to comprehend seven-eighths, or nine-tenths, or even more of the whole capital of the West-Indian colonies. Of the remaining eighth or tenth, the part which would be materially deteriorated in value would be that which was exclusively applicable to the manufacture of sugar. The buildings and utensils of this description could not, perhaps, be converted to other uses without considerable loss.

It would only, however, be by the sugar-estates, which we have assumed to constitute two-thirds of the whole, that this loss would in any case be incurred; and it would probably not be incurred but by a part of these. The necessity which

might arise of changing the culture from sugar to some other articles would attach only to the inferior soils, and these would share the fate to which the agriculturists of Great Britain itself are obliged to submit.

This claim for a continuance of the protecting duty in favour of West-Indian sugar, on the score of the capital invested in its cultivation, it is here, however, to be observed is a claim which might be urged with equal force in the case of *every* improvident speculation. In the year 1813, as we have seen, it was affirmed, in the House of Commons, by one who was a very competent witness, that during the preceding twenty years there were few estates in the West Indies which had not changed hands; which had not, that is to say, been sold, or given up to creditors; and this testimony is fully confirmed by various reports of West-Indian assemblies. With respect, then, to all but a few of the West-Indian sugar estates, the investment which has been made of capital in their culture must have taken place within the last thirty years. They must have been purchased, or transferred therefore at a value regulated by the various considerations which ought to enter, and doubtless did enter, into the calculation of every prudent purchaser. They would be estimated at what they could be considered as really worth at the time of the purchase or transfer, and not at the amount of money

which rash speculators may have advanced upon them; just as a trader cannot reckon as capital upon the money he may have lent, or the goods he may have furnished, to another trader, after he has been obliged to accept a dividend or a composition of 5s. in the pound for his debt: the other three-fourths of the debt are gone for ever. The purchaser, therefore, of a West-Indian estate in 1804, for instance, or the mortgagee who then entered into possession, was bound to estimate its value fairly, as it was at that moment, not according to the amount of his improvident advances, but according to its real intrinsic worth, as the same might have been deduced from the authentic report of the assembly of Jamaica of that year already referred to; taking into view, likewise, its capabilities as compared with other lands employed in the culture of sugar, the charges to which it was subject, and those risks of change, from the competition of other parts of the world, and from the altered policy of the state, to which it was liable. He had already seen that all the colonies conquered from Holland, Spain, &c. had been allowed to bring their sugars to our home market. There existed no reason at that time why the conquest of Java might not have raised up another formidable rival, nor why the sugars of Bengal should not come into competition with his. No pledge had been given to that effect. On the contrary, the possibili-

ty of such a competition was distinctly foreseen at the time. To prove this it will be only necessary to refer again to the same elaborate report of the assembly of Jamaica, in which this very risk is largely adverted to. Purchasers, therefore, during the period of which we speak, must have embarked their capital with this very risk in their view, and their estimate of the value of West-Indian property ought, in common prudence, to have taken this risk also into account.

The great comparative disadvantage of adventuring capital in the cultivation of sugar, in our own West-India Islands, was established by the most conclusive evidence, before his Majesty's privy council, in 1789. On referring to the volume containing that evidence, it appears that questions were put on the subject to the authorities in the colonies and to their agents at home, the answers to which are of the most unambiguous kind. The answer of Jamaica is, that the common average yielding of an acre of sugar canes, in St. Domingo, was 38 cwt. and that the average of the most productive parishes in Jamaica was only 12 cwt. the average of the whole island being not more than 8 cwt.; while the mode of cultivating the cane and manufacturing the sugar was much more expensive in the latter than in the former. In St. Domingo, they state that 300 negroes could produce a million pounds weight of

sugar; while, in Jamaica, it required nearly 900 negroes to produce the same quantity on what was there deemed goo l land.

The answers of the other islands, though not so specific, were to the same effect.

Was it not to be foreseen that the capital laid out in the cultivation of lands so disadvantageously situated was laid out at a fearful risk? Let it only be considered what would have been the fate of all our old colonies had the British arms succeeded in conquering St. Domingo during the revolutionary war. The cultivation of sugar in those colonies must have ultimately ceased; they could not by any possibility have stood the competition with that island. But though St. Domingo was not conquered, yet Guiana and Trinidad were conquered, and their sugars were brought into free competition with those of our old colonies. Cuba, also, had begun to grow sugar much more largely, and the rivalry of Bengal became, at that time, as we have seen, an object of serious apprehension to West Indians. For the deterioration, or even loss of capital embarked under such circumstances, the capitalist seems to be excluded from the right of complaining, except of his own improvidence.

I might no less confidently refer to the whole of the proceedings in the parliamentary committees of 1807 and 1808, on the subject of Sugar

and Distillation, as decisive on this point of the then ruined state of West-Indian property.

But there is another view of the subj ct which it will be proper to take. The capital which has been embarked in West-Indian property during the last thirty years, the period since which it is affirmed that almost all the estates in the West Indies have changed hands, has been chiefly, if not entirely the capital of English merchants; and it has been advanced by them strictly as a mercantile speculation. They perfectly knew all their risks, risks so great as to have become notorious and almost proverbial. What was their inducement for laying out their capital on West-Indian estates? Was it their opinion of the permanence of that species of property? Was it the assurance of a protecting duty? This will hardly be affirmed. It was simply the large annual return which their advances were made to yield to them, and which were considered by them, justly or not, as equivalent to their risks. They have no more right, therefore, to complain in this instance, than Insurance Companies have a right to complain that they are suddenly called upon to pay a loss, for engaging to sustain which they had received the stipulated premium.

An almost entire change of property, it is affirmed, has taken place in the West Indies

since 1793, a period during which the market for West-Indian sugar has been undergoing very great fluctuations, and when, therefore, the merchant would naturally examine with much solicitude his chances of gain or loss in embarking his capital on the security of a sugar-estate. The ordinary advantages accruing to him from such an advance of capital may be estimated, perhaps, at from 12 to 20 per cent. per annum; including interest at 6 per cent. commissions on the sugar sold and on the supplies furnished, gain by insurances, freights, &c. If we suppose him to retain the consignments of such an estate for from eight to twelve years, his capital would, in that case, be replaced, and whatever he might obtain beyond this would be the bonus, for the sake of which he was content to encounter the risk of loss.

But is it fair, may it not be asked, that a speculator of this description should come with a claim either for protection against East-Indian sugar, to the immense disadvantage both of Great Britain and India, or for indemnity? If his speculation has benefited him, the demand is perfectly monstrous. If it has injured him, what claim has he to consideration beyond the thousands of unfortunate speculators in underwriting, or in any other line of business, who have been hurt by their speculations?

A very large proportion, however, of the property vested in sugar-estates at this moment, it would appear, has been vested in them by such speculators as have just been described, who, we may assume, have been proceeding in their speculations with a view to their own profit or security, rather than to the permanent interests of the proprietor to whom their advances were made. This seems to be proved by the course which they have generally bound the proprietors to pursue in the management of their estates. It would, for example, have been very highly for the interests of all proprietors, during the last twenty years, to have diminished their culture of sugar, and to have applied the labour withdrawn from it to the culture of other articles, and particularly of provisions. The evil under which they have laboured has been the evil of low prices for their sugars, and high prices for their provisions. Their obvious policy, therefore, would have been to have lessened the cultivation of the former, and to have increased the growth of the latter. They must, in the end, have greatly benefited themselves and their slaves by such a plan steadily pursued. But this, it is obvious, would not have suited the views of the merchant. His commissions and other gains both on the sugars and the supplies would have been abridged. Instead of an interest on his capital of from 12 to 20 per cent. he must have been content, in this case, with

an interest, perhaps, of from 7 to 15 per cent. But he would naturally be unwilling to consent to a change of system, which, though beneficial to the West-Indian planter, must lessen his gains as consignee. If the quantity of sugar were materially diminished, the planter might be led to fear that a foreclosure of his mortgage would follow. The sugar, therefore, must be produced at whatever disadvantage to him; and provisions to feed the slaves, instead of being grown on the spot, must be imported from abroad, though at three times the cost, in order that the speculations of the merchant may be made to answer. This whole subject will be found ably illustrated in a letter addressed by a West-India merchant to a West-India planter, in 1808, and printed for Richardson. It is entitled, "A safe and permanent Remedy for the Distresses of the West-India Planters." The author's name is said to be Robley.

There are various other ways in which this question may be viewed. In every other part of the tropical world, except the sugar colonies of the West Indies, population increases rapidly, because the means of subsistence are easily procurable; and it will not be denied, that an increase of population, in whatever way it may be regarded, whether as an increase of labourers, or of a mere saleable commodity, must be considered as a source of wealth to the proprietor of

an estate. But in the sugar colonies of the West Indies the slaves have not increased. It may, therefore, be assumed, that there is some radical vice in the system, which greatly lessens at least its title to protection or compensation. It is never to be lost sight of, that the main subjects of property in the West Indies are sentient beings, to whom a proprietor stands in a far different relation from what he does to his ox, or his ass, to his cask of sugar or coffee, or his bale of cotton. There are here reciprocal rights and obligations recognised by laws human as well as divine, admitted by West-Indian proprietors, embodied in legislative acts framed by themselves, and assumed in all their apologies for colonial slavery. They would all readily admit, that Mr. Hodge, of Tortola, who, by his desperate cruelties, had reduced in a few years the slaves on his estate to less than a fourth of their original number, was not entitled to any compensation for such loss. But, on the same principle, in whatever degree, on inquiry, it shall appear that the West-Indian proprietors have failed in their clear and acknowledged obligations, as they respect the well-being, the personal comfort, and the moral improvement of their dependents; and still more in whatever degree their exercise of uncontrolled power over those dependents shall have tended to their diminution, degradation, and misery, to the shortening of their lives, and to the abridge-

ment of the usual sources of increasing population, in that degree do they lessen their claim to indulgence and favour. And here it is not meant to speak of particular instances of misconduct and abuse, but of the general system which pervades the colonies, and which is manifestly unfavourable to human life, and, therefore, to human happiness.

But to take another view of this subject. It has now become a settled principle in our social economy, that no man should wilfully neglect the means of guarding against the contingencies of life, when it is in his power to do so: if he suffers from such neglect, he becomes an object, not so much of pity, as of reprehension. For example: a person who should be in the enjoyment of a large but precarious income, and who should neglect the obvious means of securing a provision for himself in case of its ceasing, or for his family in the event of his death, and who should even deride all salutary counsel upon the point, would justly expose himself to severe censure, and would greatly weaken his title to liberal consideration. The man, also, who should venture his whole fortune in a ship, which he refused or neglected to insure, would be spoken of as having been the author of his own ruin, and could prefer no claim to indemnity from the public, and least of all from those who had warned him of the consequences of his folly.

Now, if we should concede, merely for the sake of argument, what in itself is more than questionable, that the removal of the protecting duty on sugar would render unproductive more than it now is the capital embarked in its cultivation, still the matter would rest on the same principle which applies to the improvident annuitant, or the still more extravagantly improvident merchant, to whose cases we have adverted.

But what could the West Indians have done to insure against such contingencies as go to affect the value of their property in slaves? They could have done much, independently of the more obvious measure of encouraging their increase. They could have done what they have been often urged to do, and what the successful example of other colonies might have taught and encouraged them to do.

In the colonies of Spain, for example, it has, from an early period, been the established practice to encourage the manumission of their slaves, by means which replaced the capital that had been originally laid out in their purchase. Suppose the value of a slave to have been £50; the law provided, that whenever the slave could repay this entire sum to his master he should be manumitted: and, to facilitate this object, it was the usual practice, that whenever the slave had it in his power to repay even a fifth part of

the sum, he should have a proportional part of his time assigned to him for his own benefit.

To make this beneficent and truly provident plan more infallibly successful, the slave was allowed the Sabbath as a day of rest and enjoyment, as well as a day for attending to his religious duties. On that day no labour was exacted from him, but he was allowed to recruit his strength for the labour of the other six. One day in the week was further allowed him, on which to provide for his sustenance and that of his family. That object being secured, the slave was at liberty to turn his own time to the best advantage, to hire himself to his master or to whoever else would employ him, or to occupy himself in cultivating such articles, or in rearing such animals as would command a ready sale at the next market. As soon as he accumulated in this way the fifth part of his value, he was then permitted to redeem with it one of the five days belonging to his master. This farther portion of time enabled him to accumulate more rapidly the means of purchasing another day; and thus matters proceeded, until the whole of his time was redeemed, and his manumission was completed. He then, if he had a wife and children, added his entire exertions to theirs, until they also were redeemed. The master had thus his capital replaced without loss. But this

was not his whole advantage; a peasantry was raised up around him, accustomed to industrious exertion, to forethought, and to frugality, who had experienced the happy effects of regular and persevering labour, in their deliverance from slavery as the reward of it, and in the comforts which surrounded them. No instance, it is believed, has occurred, in the Spanish colonies, of an insurrection on the part of these enfranchised Africans, or of their attempting to instigate such as remained slaves to any other means of deliverance than those which they themselves had so successfully pursued. Nor has it been only the *internal* peace of the Spanish colonies which was promoted by this arrangement, but they were rendered almost secure against foreign aggression. Trinidad was the only Spanish colony we were ever able to conquer, and that colony was not only then in its infancy, but it had been settled on principles materially varying from the usual colonial policy of Spain.

Such was the course of things in the Spanish colonies generally, down to the year 1793. In all of them, at that time, not excepting Cuba itself, the number of free blacks equalled or exceeded the number of slaves. Since that time the annual importations of new negroes into Cuba has been so large as greatly to alter this proportion, but still even there the free black population amounts to from a third to a half of the slave-

population; whilst in the other colonies of Spain, the proportion of the free population has gone on increasing so fast, that the process has been not only easy but safe to complete emancipation. In Spanish St. Domingo all are now free. In Spanish South America, the numbers still in bondage form but a very small part of the whole black and coloured population; and measures have been adopted for the speedy and entire extinction of slavery even among them. All this too has been effected, it would seem, without any derangement of property, without any civil commotion, without any complaint on the part of the masters, nay with their willing and cheerful concurrence.

Now let this system be compared with that which prevails in our own colonies. To the plantation-slaves, generally speaking, the Sabbath is neither a day of rest, nor instruction, nor religious worship. It is the day on which (in Jamaica especially) they are forced to cultivate their grounds in order to provide for their subsistence on the other six days, and on which they must carry their little produce to market to exchange for necessaries. In short, the Sunday is the day allotted them, not for rest and refreshment, or for religious uses, but for sustaining themselves and families during the week. In this country the labourer has six days in the week on which to provide for his own subsist-

ence and that of his family. The negro slave must perform this task chiefly on the day which everywhere else is a day of bodily repose. The effect of this incessant occupation, independently of the loss of all the moral uses intended by the appointment of the Sabbath, is the wearing down more rapidly of the human frame, feebleness, disease, and premature old age.

In addition to the Sunday, the slaves have, also, on most sugar-plantations a day given them every fortnight, (except during the four or five months of the crop, or sugar harvest, when they are made to work all day and half the night,) on which to cultivate their provision grounds, amounting, on the average, to at most sixteen or seventeen days in the year, instead of the fifty-two days which the Spanish slaves were allowed.

It is needless to point out what influence the rest of the Sabbath and the substitution of fifty-two week-days in the year given to all the slaves in the West Indies, for their own purposes, would have had on their comfort, and would have had also in preventing that glut of sugar in our markets, which has been the more immediate cause of the distress of the West Indians. *They* doubtless thought to enrich themselves by this systematic desecration of the Christian Sabbath; but it was a design which, as might be expected, Providence has not blessed. It has proved, evidently, one efficient cause

of their present embarassments, independently of the injurious effect it must have had on the health, and strength, and increase of their slaves.

Again, that part of the Spanish system which had it in view to replace the master's capital by the redemption of the slave, is not only wholly neglected in our colonies, but all approach to it is discouraged, nay, in many cases, actually rendered almost impossible, by colonial legislative enactments. Heavy taxes are laid, in some of the colonies, on manumissions, amounting, in one instance, to £500 currency on each, and constituting an effectual prohibition of the practice; in another to £300 for women, and £200 for men. In short, not only are no means whatever employed for bringing about a gradual and progressive manumission, which shall, at the same time, indemnify the master, improve the slave, and fit him, by previous habits, for using his freedom for his own benefit and the general advantage of the community; but the whole current of West-Indian legislation, and the entire tone of West-Indian feeling are decidedly adverse to such a policy.

In discussing the question of capital, however, we must not lose sight of the distinction to be taken between the loss incurred by the individual, and the loss to the community. It cannot be doubted that many changes, in the highest degree beneficial to the community, may be at-

tended by loss to individuals. It cannot be doubted, for example, that the general interests of the community would be greatly promoted by the conversion of a slave population, acted upon only by the impulse of the lash, and incapable therefore of rising from the level almost of the brute, into a free population accessible to the force of all the motives which, in ordinary circumstances, influence men to exertion. Much light may be thrown on this problem, not merely by abstract reasoning, but by experience; by a consideration, that is to say, of the facts furnished by history, from the time of the abolition of villainage in England to the recent abolition of slavery in Ceylon and Columbia. And let it be remembered, that it is possible to arrive at this state of emancipation, as has happened in Spanish America, in Ceylon, in the Malaccas, and at Bencoolen, without wading through anarchy and blood, nay, even with advantage to the masters, provided they will cordially lend themselves to the introduction of a better system. If they would do so, no doubt can exist that, in the end, instead of losing, they would themselves benefit largely by the change.*

* I would recommend to those who may wish to investigate this curious and important question more fully, Cropper's Letters to Mr. Wilberforce; A. Hodgson's Letter to Mr. Say; and Coster on the Amelioration of Negro Slavery, printed in the 16th Number of the Pamphleteer.

But not to dwell longer on this view of the subject, and supposing things to continue as they are in our colonies, it might be proved, that the alarms of ruin to the planter, from the diminished culture of sugar, are extravagant at least, if not groundless. This proposition admits of a ready illustration in the case of Barbadoes, where the quantity of sugar now grown is very small, as compared with its population. Much of the labour, which in neighbouring islands is bestowed on sugar, is here judiciously applied to other objects, and principally to the growth of provisions and various articles of necessity and comfort. And, although the Barbadians may feel the pressure of the present times, yet they feel it less than the colonists in general, and their slaves are much better off, as to food, than they are in the islands around them; nay, it is, perhaps, the only slave colony except the Bahamas, where at this moment the slaves appear to be increasing.

By pursuing the policy, in this respect, of the Barbadians, there cannot be a doubt that the other West Indians would be saved from much of that loss, which they contemplate as the effect of removing the protecting duty on East-Indian sugar.

There is one circumstance, however, which renders it almost hopeless that any rational and enlightened plan should be adopted, and systematically pursued, for improving the state of the

West-Indian sugar-planters, and that is, their very general non-residence. Besides having to support an expensive domestic establishment in Europe, in addition to their establishments abroad, the conduct of these is left to hired agents, who have no identity of interest with the owners, and who, from their very distance, are not subject to any effective control. If the owners themselves were to reside upon and to manage their own estates, they would soon find that it was in their power to improve their property in a variety of ways, and they would learn to employ the labour of their slaves in what might be in reality the most advantageous mode of employing them; and there would infallibly follow from such a course of proceeding an improvement, instead of a loss, both of capital and of income.

Let it be remembered, that the sugar-planters of Cuba and the Brazils, of Louisiana and Bengal, are with few exceptions *resident.* This circumstance alone constitutes an immense difference in the general results of sugar planting in those quarters as compared with our West-Indian islands. But because our planters choose to be *non-resident*, and to enjoy the ease and luxury of a British domicile, while they place the management of their distant estates, as well as the entire power of the lash, in the hands of hired agents, this is no reason why we, the British consumers of their sugars, should be made to

defray all the cost of this indulgence. If they cannot administer their estates themselves, and hold the fearful power of the whip in their own hands, instead of delegating it to others, they ought, at least, to sell their estates to persons differently situated. And if they object, that sales cannot be effected but at ruinous prices, this is only a farther proof that they place too high a value on their capital. There can be no doubt, that both here and in the West Indies property will always command what, under all the circumstances of the case, it is really worth.

But the West Indians will probably refuse to be satisfied with these suggestions, and will be disposed to dwell on this simple view of the subject: *Sugars have already sunk to a losing price. If the sugars of the East Indies are admitted on equal terms with ours, they will sink still lower; our present distress will then be turned into absolute ruin.*

Such, however, is the argument, with little variation, by which the public has been assailed on every alteration, in whatever department of our trade and manufactures, from a bad to a better system. What would England have now been, had such an argument availed to prevent the various beneficial changes which have taken place of late years? What opening of commerce,

what improvement in machinery, what method of cheapening the cost of production or of carriage, has not been uniformly and immemorially met by this sweeping objection? Upon this principle, we never ought to have made peace after having been in a state of war for twenty years, a date as long as that which has been assigned to almost all the actual proprietors of sugar-plantations in the West Indies. Society, it might be argued, had accommodated itself to that state of existence, and it would be unjust to change it. Accordingly, the distresses which, during the last six or seven years, have been experienced in this country have been attributed, by our statesmen, to a change from war to peace. It certainly was impossible not to foresee that this change would be attended with loss of capital and loss of profits, with inconvenience and distress, to a number of persons infinitely exceeding the whole number of West-Indian sugar planters fifty times told. But was this consideration allowed, for one moment, to weigh against the unambiguous duty of the government, and the clear and palpable interests of the whole community? The war ceased; multitudes were in consequence reduced to comparatively straightened circumstances, and not a few even to absolute want. It became, indeed, the duty of the government and the public to alleviate this distress as much as possible. But it could never be argued, for one moment,

that justice required them to perpetuate the unnatural and cruel state of war, lest certain individuals should be injured by its cessation. As little can it be argued that it is incumbent upon them to continue an unjust and oppressive monopoly, lest those who profit by that injustice and oppression should be subjected to inconvenience or partial loss.

Would such an argument as this be tolerated in other cases, even where the claims arising from past prescription, and the prospects of future distress, were much less dubious than in that of the West Indians? What might not the watermen of the Thames have had to allege against the scheme of erecting the bridges which adorn that river and minister so much to the public convenience? What a strong case of loss of capital and of certain ruin might not the carriers of goods between Manchester and London have urged against the plan of inland navigation? Had parliament listened to the wharfingers of London not one of those docks would have been erected which now afford such facilities and such security to commerce. Or had the spinners of cotton and the knitters of stockings been as powerful in Parliament, and as influencial with the government, as the West Indians have shown themselves to be, their clamours and their arguments (for their case was infinitely stronger) must have succeeded in laying the same interdict on the improvement and

astonishing increase of our cotton and stocking manufactures, which the West Indians are labouring to impose on the immense capabilities of increase in our trade with India. Nay, the very art of printing might have been lost to the world had the loud and ingenious complaints of the copiers of manuscripts of that day succeeded in prohibiting the use of the press, or even in obtaining a heavy protecting duty against it.

Another argument employed by the West Indians is of this sort: — *The East Indies is a distant and precarious possession, easily torn from us by means of foreign aggression or internal commotion, and endangered by its very extent; while the West Indies are secured to us by their proximity, and by their being broken into small colonies, in which our naval force affords us the easy means of quelling insurrection, and no foreign power which can wrest from us.*

It cannot be denied that the East Indies are, to a certain degree, insecure. In no case of conquest, however, which has hitherto occurred, especially conquest of so distant and so extensive a kind, have the prospects of security been so encouraging. The singular and anomalous institutions which exist in India, and which seem to owe their existence, like the constitution of England, not to design but to a concurrence of for-

tuitous circumstances, appear very wonderfully adapted to preserve that country in peace and dependence. Our government is felt by the conquered as a benefit conferred upon them. Under its mild and benign influence they enjoy a security of person and property unknown under the Hindoo or Mahomedan sway. Justice is purely and impartially administered; their prejudices are respected; and their happiness and prosperity are sedulously cultivated.* The armies also which defend India are principally native armies, superior by their discipline and the description of their officers, to any thing which Hindostan, as now circumstanced, can hope, without some mighty moral change, to see arrayed; and they are rendered infinitely superiór to any force which any European power could bring against them, by their thorough adaptation to the climate, the great enemy with which foreign armies would have to contend. The means of recruiting our Indian armies also are almost without limit.

The West-Indian Colonies, however, possess no such resources. They have, one and all, protested against committing any part of their defence to

* The measure under discussion constitutes, it is admitted, an important deviation from these principles, and is therefore calculated to excite discontents in India; and this, unquestionably, is one strong ground of objection against it.

native troops, and they insist on being guarded by Europeans at whatever expense of life and treasure. Their slaves, outnumbering the white population in almost every colony by at least twenty to one, form the great object of their apprehensions, and it is against them they have to multiply precautions. Had it been the policy of West Indians to attach to them the negro and coloured population, by such a course as has been pursued in the Spanish colonies, they might, without doubt, have relied upon it in the hour of danger. But in what light can it be viewed at present but as a mass of combustible matter, requiring only a spark to ignite it and to produce the most tremendous of all explosions? To talk of the security of possessions where nineteen-twentieths of the population are bowed down under the yoke of a personal and degrading servitude is fatuity; especially while Hayti towers among them in all the strength and vigour of a liberty newly achieved by blood and vengeance; and while the continent of South America has proclaimed the emancipation of their fellows. Can the security of Jamaica, for example, almost within view of Hayti, and to leeward of it; or can that of our colonies in Guiana, with a boundless continent behind our plantations, and with a free population advancing to meet the slaves of those plantations with offers of liberty and fraternization, be placed

for one moment in comparison with the security of our Indian empire? Let it be remembered also that we have no guarantee against another war with America. We have shown her the vulnerable point of our West-Indian possessions. In the last war we invited her slaves in the South, by the tempting prospect of liberty, to join our standard, and take part against their masters. Suppose, in the case of another war with that power, a descent made on the Island of Jamaica by a black American army commissioned to liberate their brethren. What could the white population effect against such a force? Regiment after regiment might come from Europe to their aid; the climate would sweep them off as fast as they came. Let it be recollected also what a mere handful of resolute maroons was able to effect, about twenty-seven years ago, against the whole force of the island of Jamaica. Not more than 200 fighting men kept that whole force at bay for eight or nine months, until they were induced, by a promise of complete amnesty, to lay down their arms. Had that 200 been 5000, or even 2000, the island would probably have then been lost to England.

It cannot be denied, however, the West Indians argue, that,—*The West Indies are a source of wealth to the mother country,*

that they give extensive employment to our manufacturers, and that their produce, over and above what is necessary to pay for the goods exported thither, is all consumed in this country, and contributes largely to the general prosperity of the empire.

A full investigation of this point, it is firmly believed, would show that the West Indies, instead of being a source of wealth to this country, are really, as matters are now managed, a dead weight upon it, a source of enormous expense, without any adequate return. For, in pursuing this inquiry, we must take into the account, not simply the amount of our West-Indian trade, but the amount of what it costs us to maintain it, and the amount of what we lose by the preference we give to them over other parts of the empire.

With respect to the imports of sugar, rum, and coffee, it cannot be denied that the country is a loser instead of a gainer, by all we pay for the produce of our West-Indian colonies, over and above the price we should pay if the present preference were not given them. The amount of this excess of price may be estimated at upwards of a million and a half annually. The cost of defending and governing the West Indies may be reckoned to be, on an average, even without including times of war, from half a million to a million more. Here, then, is an absolute outlay of from two to three millions annually, before we derive the slightest

profit from our West-Indian trade, How is this outlay to be compensated? It will be said by the produce and manufactures we export for the consumption of the West Indies. The amount of that export has been extravagantly estimated by some persons even as high as seven or eight millions. But, in fact, it has seldom if ever exceeded more than half the latter sum, and of that three-fourths, at the least, have been exported, not for the consumption of the West Indies, but of Spanish South America; so that the real export to the West Indies for their own consumption has probably not much exceeded a million annually. But even if the consumption of the West Indies amounted to twice or thrice that sum, no reasonable calculation of the profits upon it could exhibit any compensation for a tenth-part of the sums annually expended in maintaining this factitious system.

In fact, the gross amount of our manufactures *consumed* in the West Indies does not equal the direct charge which they bring upon us. But whatever that amount may be, it would be equally called for in return for the sugars of any other part of the empire; and it would in that case be clear gain to the country. There would be no charge of two or three millions to turn that gain into an immense loss.

But if, besides this, a calculation were to be made of the enormous waste of capital which

this West-Indian lottery, for lottery it is, has been continually causing, and is now causing, to this country, it would astonish the public. The sugar-estates of the West Indies have been cultivated wholly by capital drawn from this country. They are now cultivated by the same means. Nay, the West-Indian sugar-planters, speaking generally, live, not on their own resources, but on the capital of our merchants. Their plantations, they admit, and have admitted over and over again, do not yield them, on the average, any profit. And there can be no stronger proof of this, than is afforded by their own statements, which will be found in the Appendix.

Now compare all this with India. She pours capital into this country instead of depriving us of it. We have not first to buy the labourers at enormous rates before we set them to work. We are not required to pay upwards of a million and a half annually, by way of premium, to encourage her cultivation. Her defence and government cost us nothing. The expense of every establishment connected with her at home or abroad is defrayed from her own resources. The very savings made in India by the European civil and military servants of the Company, and transferred to Great Britain, have amounted to more, probably, during the last twenty years, than the whole *net* revenue derived, during the same pe-

riod, by the planters of the West Indies from their sugar-estates.

I purposely forbear from contrasting the moral influences of the one and of the other system, and shall content myself with having shown that the alarms sounded about loss of wealth from a change of system are utterly groundless. No loss, I believe, would be incurred, but, on the contrary, a great gain would be realized to the community at large, by throwing open the sugar-trade of this country to the free competition of India.

But why should it be supposed that the consumption of our manufactures even in the West Indies will be diminished by a change of system there. All that the slaves would want to enable them to procure the clothing and other necessaries they require, would be, that instead of the scanty supply now granted them by their masters they should have time given them to supply themselves. What they receive from their masters is the minimum required for decency and health. Their better and gayer clothes are even now purchased by themselves, with the produce of their labour chiefly on the Sunday. A day given to them in each week, more than they now have, would produce a larger consumption among them of English manufactures than would be produced by doubling the price of sugar.

This subject may be illustrated by a reference to the case of Hayti. Besides a considerable trade which this island maintains with France and Germany, and the amount of British manufactures which it annually consumes, it carries on a very extensive commercial intercourse with the United States. It appears, from official documents laid before Congress, that in the year ending September, 1821, there had been imported into the United States from Hayti, produce amounting in value to 2,246,237 dollars, and exported from the United States direct to Hayti, goods amounting in value to 2,270,601 dollars. The tonnage belonging to the United States employed in this trade amounted to 50,000 tons, being double that which was employed in the whole trade of the Spanish and Portuguese possessions in America, Cuba excepted. Both its export and import trade with the United States was equal to one-half of the trade which the United States carried on, in the same year, with all the possessions, in the West Indies and South America, of Great Britain, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, and Spain, Cuba excepted. Besides this, many vessels are stated to have cleared out from the United States for the West Indies generally, or for St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's, which afterwards proceeded to Hayti and disposed of their cargoes there. In addition to all which the anomalous state of the

political relations of Hayti is to be taken into the account, as preventing the developement of her resources and faculties. If her independence were acknowledged, and the fears of invasion obviated, she might be expected soon to double her commerce.

But after all that can be said, what can be more decisive of the question than this? We have in the West Indies a costly and diminishing population of about seven or eight hundred thousand consumers, nineteen-twentieths of these in the lowest state of degradation; and in the East Indies a population of 100 millions, consisting of all varieties of ranks, who cost us nothing, to whose demands for our manufactures an impulse has been given which, if duly encouraged, and not cramped by such injudicious restrictions as that we are now considering, will rise to an extent infinitely beyond the demand of the West Indies multiplied twenty fold.

I shall here quote an authority in favour of the astonishing growth of our export trade to India, to which the friends of Government, at least, will not object; that of the official view given of the "administration of our affairs at the commencement of 1823." We are there told, page 145, that, in 1815, we exported only 604,800 yards of printed cotton to British India; but that, in 1821, we exported 7,602,245 yards, and, in 1822, 9,979,866 yards. In 1815, we exported to India only 213,408 yards of

plain cottons; in 1821, the quantity was 6,724,031 yards; and, in 1822, 9,940,736 yards, an increase in seven years in this last instance amounting to upwards of forty-five fold; and in the former to upwards of sixteen fold. And what limit can be put to the progressive augmentation of this trade, but the power of obtaining a return for our exports, a power of which the protecting duty on East-Indian sugar goes to deprive us?

But there is another class of arguments to which it will be well to advert. It is said, *The distress of the West Indies has been caused by the act of the British parliament abolishing the slave-trade. They have been deprived of that source of adding to their population, while it has been enjoyed by the colonies of other nations. This privation has proved a serious injury to their interests, and for this injury, of which they have been the patient and uncomplaining sufferers, they ought to be indemnified in some degree by the monopoly of the home-market.*

Now, unless the West Indians are disposed to maintain and to act upon a principle, which they have often most indignantly disavowed when it has been charged upon them by abolitionists, namely, that it is cheaper to buy slaves than to breed them; that is to say, that it would have been better for them not to have reared a single

negro during the last twenty years, but to have gone on working out their gangs and buying new, as postmasters do their horses in this country:—unless I say they adopt this principle, in all the extent of its merciless application, the argument has no relevancy whatever to their present circumstances; for every cargo of slaves, added to their existing stock, would have aggravated their distress instead of diminishing it. The evil under which they have laboured has been this, that they have had too many slaves employed in growing sugar. The quantity produced has been more than Great Britain was willing to consume; and from foreign markets, but for the bounty allowed them, they would in any case have been excluded by the circumstance, avowed by themselves, of the superior fertility of the soil of foreign colonies as compared with our own, (Guiana, perhaps excepted,) and the consequently greater cheapness at which foreign sugars may be supplied. The question therefore is, not whether they might not have been better off had the foreign as well as the British slave-trade been put an end to? possibly they might: but the real question is, would they not have been worse off had they possessed those means of increasing their population, and extending their cultivation of sugar, which the slave-trade would have afforded them? The infallible consequence must have been, that the great mass of imported slaves would have flowed towards Guiana.

Its fertile soil would have tempted speculators. The quantity of sugar grown there would probably by this time have swelled to four or five times what it now is. The sugar of the old islands, with the exception of a few rich spots, would thus have been greatly undersold, and its culture in those islands must, therefore, have been generally abandoned.

Now let us suppose such a case to have actually happened, and I would ask, what remedy it would have been possible to apply to it? We could not have said, " the fertility of Guiana has ruined all our old islands, we will therefore give to the latter a protecting duty against the former." Had we done this, the planters of Guiana might well have clamoured about injustice, vested rights, capital sunk, &c. &c. &c. But wherein does the present case differ in point of principle? In another part of the British dominions, equally entitled at least with Guiana to favour and encouragement, from the fertility of soil and other circumstances, sugar may be grown so as greatly to undersell the West Indies, notwithstanding the higher freight and insurance with which it is loaded. Ought not things to be left to their natural course in this case, just as they would of necessity have been left in the other, or as they must have been left in the case of our having conquered St. Domingo and annexed it to the British Crown? Our West-Indian sugar-planters will at least be no worse off now than they would have been had we

succeeded in conquering St. Domingo, or had the great object of their petitions and remonstrances for twenty years been attained, in the continuance of the slave-trade, until Guiana had been completely peopled. If it be said that we should, in that case, have had a compensation for the ruin of the old colonies in the prosperity of St. Domingo or of Guiana, still the present complainants, the planters of the old islands, would have been ruined; and as far as respects the national interests, it may be safely affirmed, that we have, in British India, a better and cheaper, as well as a humane and guiltless compensation for any possible injury the West Indies may sustain from the removal of the protecting duty.

But to return: it can, in no way, be shown, that the state of the West Indians would have been bettered; on the contrary, it could easily be shown, that it would have been deteriorated, by the continuance of the slave-trade, under any circumstances which would not actually imply the barbarous and revolting principle of its being more profitable to work out their slaves by hard labour, and to supply their place by purchases from Africa, than to treat them humanely and to encourage their increase.

So far, indeed, is the present argument of the colonists from being correct, that it might be demonstrated that the West Indies have suffered, not from the slave-trade having been abolished in 1807, but from its not having been abolished fifteen

years earlier; and that it was not then abolished was the fault of the West Indians themselves, who, on every renewal of the question from 1787 downwards, opposed the abolition with the whole weight of their powerful influence. The consequence has been that the quantity of sugar entitled to admission to the home-market has been increased from nearly two millions of cwts. in 1787 to nearly four millions in 1821. The distress, therefore, under which they labour is their own proper act, the effect of their own blind and pertinacious attachment to the slave-trade; and by the abolition of that trade they have, in fact, been saved from still greater distress.

In short, the West Indians have suffered, not from the abolition of the slave-trade by England, but from their own obstinacy in resisting its earlier abolition; from the impolicy of not opposing the settlement by British capital, and the subsequent retention of the Dutch conquered colonies, the sugars of which have increased tenfold since the year 1800, and amount to considerably more than the surplus which oppresses them; from their extending the cultivation of sugar, and even substituting it of late years for that of other articles; from their continuing, in many of the islands, to proceed on the ruinous system of not growing their own provisions and other supplies at home, but importing them from abroad at a higher rate, that they might have more labour to bestow on the culture of an ar

ticle already grown in excess; and from their most inhumanly and impoliticly, not to say impiously, exacting from their slaves seven days labour instead of six.

But it is argued that *although it would have been better for the West Indians had they agreed to abolish the slave-trade at an earlier period, yet that now, it is of the utmost importance to check the foreign slave-trade; and that this can in no way be more surely effected than by giving encouragement to our own colonies, securing to them the market of Great Britain, and opening to them the market of the world besides.*

To this I reply, that the effect of such encouragement, if it produce any effect at all, must be to raise the price of British plantation sugar. But in what way is such a rise to operate so as to produce the proposed result of checking the foreign slave-trade? It obviously cannot raise the price of British plantation sugar, without raising the price of foreign sugar also. But a rise in the price of foreign sugar must operate, not as a check but as an encouragement to the slave-trade. Nay the danger will be, and a very formidable danger it is, that, through the temptation of high prices, the slave-trade will revive in our own colonies. If the culture of sugar should become much more profitable to our planters, the effect will inevitably be,

that speculation will be excited, and that means will be found to smuggle slaves from Cuba into Jamaica, and from Surinam into Demerara, in spite of every effort that may be made to prevent it.

The idea of putting a stop to the slave-trade by artificially raising the price of the produce of slave-labour seems the most absurd and extravagant which ever entered the mind of any one pretending to be a statesman. Its true cure is to admit sugar and other articles, the produce of free labour, to fair competition in this and every market, and in a short time it will be found that neither slavery nor the slave-trade will be wanted for their growth.

But such a result as this, it is further argued, only establishes the gross injustice of the attempt to remove the protecting duty on sugar: — *Its effect, it is admitted, will supersede slavery. But the system of slavery in the West Indies has been encouraged by Great Britain, and the planters hold their slaves on the faith of parliament. The very apprehension, therefore, that this system may be endangered, by the measure of removing the protecting duty, is of itself a sufficient ground for rejecting that measure.*

This argument involves the grave question of the perpetuation of slavery in the British domi-

nions. It involves this frightful consequence, that not only the slaves now existing there, but their posterity for ever, shall irretrievably remain in their present state of bondage. This could never have been contemplated by the British legislature, and least of all by the legislature which abolished the African slave-trade as radically inhuman and unjust, and which continues, from year to year, to express its deep-rooted abhorrence of that traffic. With what consistency could parliament, after having solemnly denounced the original injustice which consigned the negroes in the West Indies to bondage, intend that they and their posterity for ever should remain in that cruel and hopeless state? The whole course of the parliamentary discussions on the subject prove not only that no such intention was ever entertained, but that the abolition of the slave-trade was regarded as certainly leading to the amelioration and final extinction of slavery in the West Indies. Such were the views of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, of Lords Grenville and Grey, of Mr. Wilberforce and of every person who took a forward part in the question. Nay, it will be found that even the late Lord Melville, then Mr. Dundas, directed his view, from the very beginning of the controversy, to the ultimate emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies. In a speech, which he made in the House of Commons, as early as the 2d of April,

1792, he distinctly avowed this purpose, and a part of his speech was devoted to reconcile West Indians to such an eventual result, as being called for not only by a regard to justice and consistency, but by the true interests of the planters themselves. In short, ample notice has been given to the West Indians that it was the settled intention of all classes of British statesmen to bring to as early a termination as might be found safe and practicable this opprobrious condition of human existence.

But even if we should admit that encouragement had of late been given to slavery in the West Indies, is that a reason why discouragement should attach to free labour in British India? Is that a reason why the East should be depressed in order to maintain unmitigated the bondage of the West? If encouragement must be given to the institution of slavery, it ought to be given by other means than by the stern exclusion of so large a part of the empire from the full benefits of British rule and protection. Besides, the circumstance that favour was once shown to a particular institution, or to a particular set of monopolists, is no good reason, nor has it ever been accounted such, for never varying our policy.*

* In Mr. Pitt's memorable speech of the 2d April, 1792, I find the following passage, which may serve as a decisive answer not only to the present argument, but to the plea of an

Innumerable precedents might be produced to the contrary; and, certainly, if we are to be at

inviolable compact having been made with the West Indians, in favour of their monopoly of the sugar-market.

"Does any man think," asks Mr. Pitt, "that the slave-trade has received any such parliamentary sanction as must place it more out of the jurisdiction of the legislature, for ever after, than the other branches of our national commerce? Is there any one regulation of any part of our commerce, which, if this argument be valid, may not equally be objected to, on the ground of its affecting some man's patrimony, some man's property, or some man's expectations? Let it never be forgotten that the argument I am canvassing would be just as strong if the possessions affected were small and the possessors humble; for, on every principle of justice, the property of any single individual, or small number of individuals, is as sacred as that of the great body of West-India Planters. Justice ought to extend her protection, with rigid impartiality, to the rich and to the poor, to the powerful and to the humble. If the laws respecting the slave-trade imply a contract for its perpetual continuance, I will venture to say, there does not pass a year without some act equally pledging the faith of parliament to the perpetuating of some other branch of commerce. In short, no new tax can be imposed, nor any prohibitory duty ever laid on any branch of trade, before regulated by parliament, if this principle be admitted. Besides this, a contract for the continuance of the slave-trade must have been void even from the beginning; for, if this trade is an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery, and murder, will any man urge that the legislature could possibly, by any pledge whatever, incur the obligation of being an accessary, or, I may even say a principal, in the commission of such enormities, by sanctioning their continuance? As well might an individual think himself bound by a promise to commit an

all guided by the general tone of public feeling, and of parliamentary discussion, on this point, we should say, that, for the last thirty years, slavery had not been encouraged but discouraged in this country. Even the protection given to the sugar grown by slaves, has been given to it in the belief and expectation, which, unhappily have proved but ill-founded, that the planters were sedulously employed in improving the condition of their slaves, so as to prepare them gradually for the enjoyment of their freedom. The whole of the discussions, I repeat it, on the subject of the slave-trade itself, from the year 1789 to the year 1822, when an address was voted to His Majesty, respecting the slave-trade and slavery at the Cape of Good Hope,* proves this beyond contradiction.

But it has been further argued, even by persons of high official authority,—*Humanity towards the slaves themselves in the West Indies, still more than consideration for the interests of the planters, requires that the sugars of*

assassination. To proceed on such grounds would infringe all the principles of law, and subvert the very foundations of morality." The reader has only to apply this powerful reasoning to the present case.

* See "Substance of the Proceedings in the House of Commons, 25th July, 1822, on the Occasion of Two Addresses to His Majesty." Printed for Hatchard.

the West Indies should be protected against East-Indian sugars. The removal of that protection would infallibly ruin the planters; and the consequence would be, that the slaves must starve.

This argument, however, appears to me to proceed on an entire ignorance of all the facts of the case.

It would be admitted, with respect to the inhabitants of any other country than the West Indies, that the growth of food is the grand means of preventing the starvation of its inhabitants, provided the country is capable of producing it. Take India, for example, and if it were asked, what is to prevent the starvation of the people of that country, should we not reply, that it was the abundance and the cheapness of food? If any man were to say of India, "Discourage the growth of indigo, and the population will starve," he would be considered as uttering a most extravagant proposition. The growers and manufacturers of indigo might suffer, indeed; but the only effect on the general state of the population would be, that rice, if it were wanted, would be grown where indigo was grown before; and that the means of sustentation would be more, rather than less, abundant. Now, if this be true, in regard to countries having a free population, it is much more infallibly true of countries cultivated by slaves, whose labour

the planter may direct at pleasure, and by which labour it is that he and his family, as well as the slaves themselves, are to be fed. At present, in many of the islands, this food is procured for them from abroad, in a manner the most disadvantageous. The labour of the plantation is devoted mainly, if not exclusively, to the culture of sugar, and it is by provisions purchased with the proceeds of this sugar, that both the master and his slaves are supported. Now, if the proprietor is obstinately bent on cultivating sugar at all hazards and nothing else, it cannot be denied that, if its culture yield no profit, he and his slaves must starve. But we should hardly venture to attribute such infatuation to any rational agent, as that he should continue to expend labour on an article the profits of which will not even pay the expense of feeding the labourer, while he possesses the means himself of raising food in abundance; and if there be any circumstances in the West-Indian system which lay him under the necessity of doing so, it is only another proof that the system is effete, and that it ought to be abandoned. In every other case, and why not in the present, this course at least would be open to the planter, namely, to grow provisions to the full extent of his own wants and that of his slaves, before he diverted their labour to other less urgent objects. It is obvious, that if his slaves are not supplied with food they can yield

him no labour at all, for any purpose. But, having the land and the labourers, if he or they starve, it can only be his own fault. The application of an adequate quantity of labour to the growth of provisions would effectually prevent this result,—would prevent the famine of his slaves, and at least preserve to him entire his stock of labourers, who must otherwise perish; and his not so applying it is the more inexcusable, because the legislative acts of the colonies, and the evidence of the colonists concur in showing that sixteen days in the year, exclusive of Sunday, are sufficient for this purpose.

But it will be said, all this may be true; but whence is the proprietor to derive the interest on his capital, the means of supporting his station in society, of educating his children? These, however, are quite different questions. We were supposing a state of things, a state actually affirmed by the West Indians to exist, in which sugar yielded no profit, and in which, therefore, a change to the plan suggested could not deteriorate the planter's condition, while it would completely secure the slaves against the threatened evil of famine. If neither on the one plan nor the other the planter can meet his engagements, he stands precisely in the situation of every other individual who is bankrupt in his means, and who must compound with his creditors. But surely, even in that case, it would be infinitely more for

the benefit of his estate to have applied a large portion of labour to the growth of provisions, in consequence of which the labourers were all healthy and robust, and the population progressive, than to have neglected this obvious means of providing for them, until they began to die of hunger and emaciation, among the unprofitable sweets they were forced to cultivate, without benefit, nay, with ruin, as it would seem, both to themselves and their master.

We will suppose an estate in the island of Nevis, with three hundred acres of cane land, cultivated by two hundred slaves, on one hundred acres of which the canes are annually replanted. It yields two hundred hogsheads of sugar, and the slaves are fed with corn imported from abroad. The sugar, however, when sold in England, has not sufficed even to pay the advances made upon it for the purchase of the food that had been required to sustain the slaves during the labours of the preceding year. The consignee refuses to make any farther advance for that purpose; the arrears of last year are unpaid, and the planter must therefore provide his supplies from some other quarter. Now, what is there in the nature of things (what there may be in the West-Indian system is another question) to prevent the owner of this estate, instead of replanting one hundred acres of his land with sugar cane, to plant the whole, or a part of it, with provisions, which

would yield him their return on the spot, in the course of three or four months, and render all advance for the food of the slaves unnecessary? He would send less sugar, it is true, to market; but he and his slaves would have been fed without the necessity of anticipating the proceeds of what he did send. He would be a richer man by pursuing this course, and his slaves, instead of being starved, would be exceedingly benefited. The consignee (probably also the mortgagee) would lose, it is true, a part of his usual commissions; but, surely, even as *his* interests are concerned, he would find more than a compensation for any such loss in the beneficial effects of the plan now suggested; a plan to the adoption of which there can exist no real obstacle, (no obstacle that any man who has a regard to his character would dare to avow,) and which plan, if adopted, would effectually obviate all danger of famine.*

In the island of Barbadoes, the quantity of sugar which is grown is very small, in proportion to its population, as compared with the other islands. But have the negroes been therefore starved, or have the proprietors therefore been visited with greater distress than other West Indians? On the contrary, a considerable por-

* See, in confirmation of this view of the subject, Mr. Robley's pamphlet, already alluded to. See also, in further elucidation of the real state of things in this respect, Appendix D.

tion of labour is applied to the growth of provisions, and to the raising of all that the island can produce which may be made available to the sustentation and comfort of the master and the slave. Proprietors, at the same time, are more generally resident than in the other islands, and they thus save the expense of an establishment in England, while they are enabled to superintend their own plantations, and to draw from them, by the right application of the labour that would otherwise be comparatively unproductive, abundant means of subsistence for themselves and their families. And the slaves, how do they fare? Certainly better than in many of the neighbouring islands. Instead of a scanty allowance being grudgingly dealt out to them from the costly barrel of corn, or rice, or flour, which has been sent from England or America, damaged, perhaps, through sea water, or spoiling from mere age, or swarming with weavils or with maggots, they have their food without stint, fresh from the neighbouring plantain-walk, or field of yams or Cassada, or Indian or Guinea corn, wholesome, pleasant, and nutritious. The consequence is, that, at the present moment, notwithstanding the peculiar harshness of the Barbadian slave-code, the slave-population of Barbadoes alone (the Bahamas ought also to be excepted where there is no sugar culture) seems to exhibit any perceptible increase; and this doubtless arises not only from

the abundance of food which the system on which Barbadoes has proceeded procures for the slave, but from the lighter species of labour which it imposes upon him.

And here let it be known to those who talk of humanity to the slave, as the motive which impels them to protect and encourage the growth of sugar in the West Indies, that they cruelly and fatally mistake the whole case. Sugar-planting, as there conducted, is by far the most severe and harassing of all the occupations in which the slaves can be employed. It is this particular branch of labour, from the mode in which it is carried on, that wears down their strength, and abridges their lives, and produces the extraordinary phenomenon of an almost universally-decreasing, or, at the most, not increasing population, wherever sugar is the grand article of growth; and that, too, in a country of such extraordinary fertility that a mere fraction of the year suffices to raise food for its inhabitants. Want of food and excessive labour, extracted by the cart-whip, will indeed produce the same effects upon population, whatever be the article cultivated. But the cultivation of sugar is necessarily oppressive, even where food is abundant, and where no peculiar severity of discipline is employed to obtain labour. It is most important, therefore, that those who have any regard to the plea of humanity, and who do not use it merely for the sake of effect in

argument, should know that whatever encouragement is given to the continuance or the increase of sugar-cultivation, in the West Indies, continues or increases the wretchedness of the slave in a degree that would attend no other species of cultivation which might be substituted for it.

But it may be further asked :—*How, if the West-Indian sugar-planter should have to encounter the depressing competition of East-Indian sugars, is he to find the means of purchasing for his slaves (besides their esculent or farinaceous food) the fish, the clothing, the tools, &c. which they require?*

To this question an answer has, in fact, been already given; and, I repeat, that all that is necessary for this purpose, is to give the slaves *time* to procure these things for themselves. In Jamaica, for example, at the present moment, the slaves are obliged to raise the whole of the provisions required for themselves and their families, with the exception of a little salt-fish; and to enable them to do this, all the time that is allowed them by *law*, besides the Sunday, is about sixteen days in the year. This scanty portion of their time is declared, by the legislature of Jamaica, in an act passed in 1816, to be sufficient to exempt the master from all obligation to provide food for his slaves. And, in point of fact, it is the only means the slaves in that island, generally speaking, have of procuring

subsistence. Now it will be allowed, that the food of the slave is by far the heaviest of all the charges to which a master is liable on his account. In value it probably exceeds every other charge twenty times told. But from this heavy charge the Jamaica proprietor disencumbers himfelf by giving to his slave sixteen days in the year, exclusive of Sunday. And this small fragment of time, as West Indians themselves have often testified, not only enables the slave to feed himself, but to buy gay clothing and various comforts. Is it not then perfectly obvious, that if, instead of sixteen days in the year, the master were to give his slaves fifty or sixty days, to be employed in the cultivation of their provision grounds, or in any other way for their own benefit in which they might choose to employ the time, he might not only as now release himself from the heaviest burden of all, that of feeding them, but also from the charge of providing them with salt-fish, clothing, or tools? Such an arrangement could not fail to prove highly beneficial, and that in a variety of ways, both to the master and the slave. It is impossible to deny that if such a plan be found practicable, and be in fact universally practised in Jamaica, to the extent of exempting the master from the charge of feeding his slaves, no good reason can be given for its not being carried into effect, to a still greater extent, in that island; or why the example of Jamaica should not be imitated by all the other colonies.

There is only one other argument of the West Indians which I have met with that remains to be noticed. It is of the following kind:—*If the circumstance that the West Indies are cultivated by slaves be made an objection to the preference given to the sugar there produced, over the sugar of the East Indies, the fact ought to be known that the sugar of the East Indies is also cultivated by slaves, the comparative severity of whose treatment, and the comparative amount of whose labour forcibly extracted from them, can alone account for the cheaper rate at which East-Indian sugar may be procured. The claims of humanity itself therefore demand, that the present system should be maintained in preference to that which it is proposed to substitute for it.*

Is it then the fact that the sugar brought to us from the East Indies is cultivated by slaves? This has been strenuously asserted both in parliament and out of it, and in support of the allegation Dr. Francis Buchanan's statistical work on the Mysore has been cited as conclusive. This work indeed has supplied the only pretence of a ground for it. But it has done so solely by means of a complete misrepresentation of his statements. The work of Dr. Buchanan makes no allusion to those provinces of British India from which sugar is brought to this country, nor

does it refer in the remotest degree to the state of society there. It refers exclusively to the province of Mysore and the districts ceded to us in its neighbourhood, where sugar is very little cultivated; where none certainly is cultivated for exportation; but into which, on the contrary, it is necessary to import sugar, for their consumption, from Bengal or Siam. This last fact is prominently and distinctly exhibited, by Dr. Buchanan, in the very chapter from which the extracts have been drawn which were intended to prove that the sugar brought hither from the East Indies is cultivated by slaves. It is readily admitted that it appears, from Dr. Buchanan's work, that, at the time of our conquest of the Mysore, (for he wrote immediately after its conquest,) slavery, to a small extent, existed in some districts of it; and he describes the condition of the slaves there as sufficiently wretched. But the rest of the argument is supplied by the ingenuity of the gentlemen who brought it forward, and who seem to have aimed to produce an impression, contrary to known facts, and in opposition even to Dr. Buchanan's statements as they respect the Mysore itself, that this slavery is general throughout Hindostan; and also that the sugar brought hither from India is cultivated by the very slaves whose state Dr. Buchanan has described. And yet, in the very chapter where that slavery is spoken of, the author not only does not assert that sugar is ex-

ported from that quarter to Great Britain, but he actually asserts, on the contrary, that a great part of the sugar consumed there is imported into it chiefly from the very province of India, namely, Bengal, which furnishes to Great Britain her supplies of that article.

But in Bengal is not sugar cultivated by slaves? Certainly not. In proof of this, I confidently appeal to Mr. Colebrooke, and every other authority on the subject who is worthy of credit.

Still it is argued, that whether the sugar of India be the produce of slave or of free labour, its comparative cheapness proves that the condition of the labourer must be much worse there than it is in the West Indies; its cheapness being only resolvable into two circumstances, the greater quantity of toil which the labourer is forced to undergo, or the smaller amount of the necessaries and comforts of life which he is allowed for his labour. But are there then no other material circumstances which influence the price of produce? Is comparative fertility of soil nothing? The Assembly of Jamaica, in their Report of 1788, already alluded to, state that the average yielding of an acre of sugar-cane in St. Domingo was 38 cwt. while the average yielding of the most productive parish of Jamaica was only 12, and of the whole island only 8 cwt. per acre, the same or a still greater quantity of labour being required to cultivate the latter than

the former. If we suppose the land employed in cultivating sugar in Bengal to be of the same fertility with that in St. Domingo, it is obvious that the same quantity of labour would there produce from three to five times the quantity of sugar it would produce in the West Indies. And supposing the labourer to work only half as hard in India as in Jamaica, he would produce twice the quantity, and be able to fare as well, and yet to sell it at half the price.

Comparative fertility and adaptation of soil may, therefore, of themselves explain the difference.

But there is another principle, no less important, which must be taken into the account, namely, the use of machinery in the culture of the soil. It must be admitted, indeed, that the agricultural machinery of the peasant of Bengal is of a very rude and simple kind: his little plough, drawn by a horse or a cow, or both together, may excite the ridicule of our British agriculturists; but it is an engine of great power in turning up the soil, when compared with the manual labour which, aided only by the hoe, is employed, with few exceptions, to turn up the soil in the West Indies. The difference in the cost of cultivation, from this single circumstance, would be found, all things else being the same, to be considerable; and, when taken in conjunction with fertility of soil, is far more than suffi-

cient to account for the cheapness of the sugars of Bengal compared with those of the West Indies,

This, however, is not all. The cart-whip of the West Indies may, and without doubt generally does, extract from the slave a greater quantity of labour than would ever be voluntarily yielded by free men. Suppose that quantity to be even twice as great, still it would not compensate for the advantages, on the side of the East Indies, arising from the other causes that have been mentioned, even if the very intensity of the labour did not involve a cost of another kind, the cost of health and life. A West-Indian cultivator, be it remembered, has first to buy his labourers. Suppose him to have bought a hundred labourers, for whom he has paid £10,000. By means of the cart-whip we will further suppose him to raise twice the quantity of sugar which, on soil of the same quality, a hundred Bengal labourers would raise in the same time. But can he therefore afford to sell his sugar at half the price, or even at the same price? Certainly not. Supposing the sugar he produces to sell for £2000, while that produced by the Bengal labourers sells only for £1000; yet half the amount he receives for it must go to replace a wasting capital, and from the remainder there are farther deductions to be made for the cost of superintendence and of driving, and for the various other dis-

advantages of a system which gives the labourer an interest opposed to that of his master, and which interest it therefore requires the most ceaseless vigilance to counteract.

But even this is not all. There is, in the very institution of slavery itself, something so radically vicious that a blight seems, by the appointment of Providence, to accompany it. Both the bodily and mental energies of the slave seem to contract into smaller dimensions. The elasticity and spring of principle and motive are wholly wanting. All is cold, and torpid, and stagnant, except when stimulated by the most debasing of all impulses, that of the lash. To expect, therefore, from a system of slavery, in any circumstances, that it can, on the whole, and in the long run, enter into successful competition with a system of free-labour is to evince an absolute ignorance of all the attributes of humanity, no less than of the very first rudiments of political science. As was well observed by Mr. Wilmot, in a late discussion in the House of Commons, when remarking on the pernicious effects of slavery, both on the master and the slave: "It is the very reverse of mercy, which is twice blessed; for this institution is twice cursed, cursing him who inflicts no less than him who bears it."

But it is not necessary to pursue this subject into all the painful peculiarities of the West-Indian system, my object in this paper being not

to expose what I believe to be the many great and crying evils of that system, but to examine the arguments advanced for continuing and even increasing the protecting duty on East-Indian sugar.

I have only, however, as yet viewed one side of this important question. There remain to be exhibited the numerous and cogent reasons, of a direct and positive kind, which may be assigned for relieving the East-Indian sugar trade from all restrictions. This, however, has already been so ably and satisfactorily done by others, that I do not feel it necessary to swell this paper by enlarging upon it. It will be sufficient to refer to the Report of the Committee of the Liverpool East-Indian Association, of the 9th May, 1822; to Mr. Cropper's Letters to Mr. Wilberforce; and to a pamphlet which has just made its appearance, published by Richardson, and evidently written by one who is a master of the whole subject. His able and lucid statements cannot fail to produce a considerable effect on the public mind. The pamphlet is entitled "On Protection to West-India Sugar."

Suffice it then to say, that while on the side of the protecting duty in question are ranged only the West-Indian sugar-planters and their creditors, amounting, possibly, on a large estimate, to 50,000 persons; on the other are placed the whole population of British India and of Great

Britain itself, to whom may, moreover, be added the slaves of our sugar-colonies.

That such a protecting duty is opposed to sound principles of commercial economy cannot be questioned: even the author of the "Administration of the Affairs of Great Britain" candidly admits this (p. 150, &c.) That no sufficient reasons for imposing it can be advanced by West Indians has, I trust, been shown. That it is injurious, as well as unjust, towards the people of India and of Great Britain it would be still less difficult to establish. I shall content myself, however, so many abler pens having taken up that part of the subject, with making a few brief and detached observations upon it.

I have already adverted to the restrictions on East-Indian shipping: their effect has been deplorable. Although the ships of every petty British colony in every part of the world are registered as British, the ships of India are denied this privilege; while, at the same time, British shipping is allowed to engross much of that Asiatic coasting trade which was formerly and exclusively theirs. They are, therefore, rotting in their harbours; their owners have been subjected to immense losses; and the many thousands of persons who were employed in building, repairing, and navigating them, have been reduced to want.

The manufactures of India have also been suf-

fering under the most cruel discouragements. While they are either entirely prohibited in this country, or loaded with duties which are in fact prohibitory, our manufactures are admitted into India at a duty of 2½ per cent. *ad valorem*; and, from the superiority of our machinery, at a rate which enables us to undersell theirs. We are gradually superseding the use of their fabrics on the continent of Asia, in the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, in the whole of America, North and South, in Europe, and in Africa. The distress thus produced among the weavers in many parts of India has been very great, far greater, if we examine the statements on the subject, than any thing which can be alleged in the case of the West Indians, and far more entitled, also, to consideration. In their case, it has been the effect of our own adverse measures; while, in that of the West Indians, we have been pursuing a system of favour and indulgence oppressive to ourselves, though, I admit, of no adequate benefit to them.

It would have been some compensation for these evils, of which we are ourselves the authors, had we freely admitted the raw produce of India to our markets; but we load a part of that raw produce with a heavy impost in favour of the produce of the West-Indian colonies. And this impost, while it is most injurious to India, brings a heavy burden on ourselves.

The absolute necessity, to the successful prosecution of our trade with India, of being allowed to bring home sugar as dead weight is now well understood. Without it, each ship of 500 tons burden must carry 200 tons of ballast, in order to bring home the lighter goods,—the cotton, and indigo, and silk, and piece-goods, of India: the freight of all these, therefore, must be increased in the proportion of 5 to 3, a disadvantage which, if continued, would issue in driving this trade from England to the continent.

If it be said, that the East-Indian merchant may ballast his ships with sugar, and afterwards send that sugar to the continent; it is manifest that he would do this also at a great disadvantage. His sugar loaded with double charges of freight, insurance, custom-house expenses, &c. &c. could not possibly enter into competition on the continent with sugar imported thither directly from India. He would probably prefer carrying at once his light goods where he must ultimately carry his sugar; and the consequence would, therefore, probably be, that the emporium of East Indian commerce would be transferred from London to Antwerp, or some other continental port.

The injury done to our sugar refiners by this protecting duty cannot be better shown, than by referring the reader to the Appendix, marked B.

To our manufacturers, however, the injury is still more serious. It may be considered as a

point established beyond question, that the only limit at present to the growing demand of India for our manufactures is the power of obtaining adequate returns. It is scarcely possible to calculate the effect which may be produced on the looms and work-shops of this country by an impulse, however small, being given to the demand for their fabrics by a population of one hundred millions of our own subjects. And for what is it that we are called upon to sacrifice this brilliant prospect, this certainty of a continually growing demand for the productions of our national industry? We are called upon to sacrifice it for the sake of a market limited to much less than a hundredth part of our East-Indian population, and the whole amount of whose consumption does not nearly equal the amount forced out of the pockets of the people to maintain our West-Indian establishments, and to enable the planters to go on extracting from their miserable slaves, by the power of the cart-whip, the sugar which we have afterwards to buy at so costly a rate.

The folly of such a system as this might itself insure its condemnation; but, when viewed in all its bearings, and especially as it affects the commercial and manufacturing interests of Great Britain, the comfort of the East-Indian peasant, and, still more, that of the West-Indian bondsman, it stands marked with the strongest features

of impolicy and injustice, and calls loudly upon the British Parliament for its revision.

We affect to encourage the growing demand for our manufactures among the population of British India, by limiting the impost, on their admission into that quarter of our dominions, to an *ad valorem* duty of 2½ per cent. But is the manufacturer of Manchester or Glasgow aware how effectually this apparent encouragement is counteracted by the protecting duty of 10*s*. a cwt. on East-Indian sugar? We shall suppose him to obtain at Calcutta 1000 cwt. of sugar for 1000 pieces of chintz or muslin, the value of each cwt. of sugar and of each piece of his goods being there 20*s*. When he brings the sugar to England, however, he has 10*s*. a cwt. to pay upon it, before he can have leave for its being admitted to home consumption on the same terms with West-Indian sugar. Is not this, in point of fact, the same thing as imposing a tax of 10*s*. a piece on his chintz or his muslin? He can obtain no more for his sugar, though he pays an additional 10*s*. upon it, than the West Indian obtains for his. To guard himself, therefore, against this heavy loss, he must demand for his 1000 pieces of goods 1500 cwt. of sugar, instead of 1000; the additional 500 being in truth neither more nor less than an import-duty of 10*s*. on each piece of his goods, which of course must operate greatly in

lessening the demand for them in India, and the production of them in Great Britain. If a direct tax of 52½ per cent. were laid on the importation of our cotton fabrics into British India, we should doubtless have the table of the House of Commons loaded with petitions on the subject. A tax so extravagant and oppressive would excite universal and vehement complaint and remonstrance: it could not be maintained, but must of necessity be abandoned. But wherein does the present system, with respect to East-Indian sugar, differ, as to its injurious effect on the manufacturing interests of Great Britain, from the direct tax we have supposed? They are, in fact, identically the same, nor would there be a single remonstrance, however strong and pointed, nor a single prayer, however earnest and importunate, applicable to the case of the direct, which is not equally applicable to the case of the indirect tax. Disguise the process as we may, the effect, in diminishing our exports, is the same in both instances; and the result of removing the protecting duty (in the case we have supposed) would be to add 50 per cent. to the capacity of Indian sugar growers to buy our manufactures, and to increase in the same ratio our export of them. Are our statesmen, then, sufficiently aware of the deep injury they are inflicting on the nation at large (including the agricultural interests) by the pre-

sent policy? Or, are the people of this country aware of the deep injury they are sustaining from it? If they were, I am persuaded that that policy would speedily be abandoned.

And here I must advert, for a moment, to an argument, in defence of the protecting duty, which I have heard urged more than once, but which, whether it be used by a statesman or by a merchant, is a proof either of his ignorance of the whole subject, or of his intention to mislead the public. "What an unreasonable clamour," it is said, "is made about this protecting duty on East-Indian sugar! Why, it is only a penny a pound! What need the people of England care whether they pay 8*d*. or 9*d*. for a pound of sugar?" I reply, in the first place, that this penny a pound, of which some persons affect to speak so lightly, makes a million and a half sterling on the whole consumption of Great Britain. In the next place, it is equal to a profit of from 50 to 100 per cent. on the cost of the article. The half of this penny a pound would constitute a profit which the East-India merchant would think most ample, or a loss which must be ruinous to him. A penny a pound! It is well for those to speak with levity of such an increase who are familiar with the profusion with which the nation has been in the habit of lavishing upon the West Indies its annual millions.

But I am persuaded that the day is past, when such a tone can any longer serve the purposes of those who use it.

Only one word more, and it is an observation for which I am indebted to the very able pamphlet on this subject which has just made its appearance. The West Indians, in pleading that the encouragement which was originally given to the growth of sugar in the West Indies constituted a compact of the most binding kind, seem to have entirely forgotten, that this encouragement was given expressly for the purpose of our being supplied with sugar cheaper than we could procure it elsewhere, and not that we might pay a higher price for it than any of our neighbours.

APPENDIX.

A.

Extract from a Report of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, dated 23d November, 1804, *and laid on the Table of the House of Commons, 25th February,* 1805.

"ALTHOUGH an abolition be an effectual, it is not the sole, means by which the West-India islands may be ruined: the same object may be obtained as completely, although with somewhat less rapidity by encouraging the cultivation of sugar in the East Indies, where the fertility of the soil, the facility of irrigation, the ease with which commodities are transported by means of an extensive inland navigation, the abundance of provisions, the cheapness of labour, and the structure of society give advantages which nature has denied to these islands, and where the cultivator is exempt from the restrictions which bear heaviest on our agriculture, and will operate as a positive and immense bounty to our rivals."

The report then contrasts at considerable length "the comparative situation of the two countries in respect of their labourers, and the capital employed in the operation of converting the cane-juice into sugar;" and infers, from the contrast, that the arrangement made on the subject of the duties

on sugar, in 1803, was unjust to the West Indies. "Far from acknowledging," they say, "the justice of this ratio or admitting its policy, we are of opinion, and hope to satisfy the House that had the discrimination proposed by the West-Indian planters, in their application to His Majesty's ministers of 25 per cent. been acceded to, it never could justly have been regarded as invidious. Double that advance would in fact have been an inadequate protection in the home-market, and insufficient to compensate to us the *restrictions* and expenses imposed on us for the benefit of the mother-country." And again—"Extending it to 50 per cent. will be found a very inadequate compensation for the restrictions and expenses attending on the West-India colonies, from which the eastern settlements are free."

Then follows a long train of reasoning, to show the impolicy of encouraging the importation of sugar from India; one brief specimen of which may suffice to show, how very erroneous the anticipations of the Jamaica planters were upon the subject.

"There can be no doubt that the value of the freight of this sugar, will drain from Great Britain to her Eastern provinces, on the most moderate computation, three millions sterling annually. The most hardy advocates for the new system cannot deny that every shilling of this must be sent in bullion; for they must acknowledge, that the exportation of British manufactures will admit of very trifling increase, and that from physical and moral causes her manufactures will never find a market among the Hindoos. It is impossible that the kingdom could support this drain of silver."

B.

Extract from the Substance of a Speech delivered by Joseph Marryat, Esq. in the House of Commons, May 15th, 1809, upon the second reading of the Martinique Trade Bill.

WHEN this bill was read for the first time, I could not help expressing my surprise that a measure unsupported by a single precedent, and as the language of the bill itself admits, contrary to all the laws, customs, and usages, established in similar cases by the wisdom of our ancestors, should be recommended to parliament on the ground of an alleged expediency, without any attempt whatever to prove that expediency being made, and without any of the parties whose interests are involved in this projected innovation, having been previously consulted. I also stated shortly my reasons for thinking that this measure, which I was aware had been suggested to His Majesty's ministers by the Committee of West-India planters and merchants, could be productive of no possible advantage to them, while it would be highly injurious to the sugar-refiners, and unjust to the inhabitants of Martinique.

If the first of these propositions only could be maintained, it would not be a sufficient ground for rejecting this bill: for I know of no objection to complying even with the prejudices of any body of men, provided those prejudices are innocent prejudices; but if it can be shown, that complying with those prejudices would be injurious to the interests of others, and a violation of good faith on the part of the British nation, then I am persuaded that this bill will no longer receive that official support from His Majesty's ministers, under the sanction of which it has been presented to this house.

With respect to the interests of the West-Indian planters, I contend, that, as in consequence of the capture of the island of Martinique, the sugars of that colony must find their way to Europe, all the mischief that can be done to the British planters by that conquest has been done; that it is now perfectly immaterial to them, whether these sugars are brought in neutral vessels to the foreign ports of the Continent, or in British vessels to the ports of Great Britain; and in the latter case, that it is equally immaterial whether they are brought here for exportation or home-consumption.

When I say that all the mischief that can be done to the British planters has been done, I mean to cast no reflection on the policy which dictated the capture of Martinique; for, if the conquest of that colony were desirable, either as extending the carrying trade; as opening a new market for the manufacturers of Great Britain; as depriving the enemy of a cruising station, peculiarly favourable to the annoyance of our commerce by his privateers, and of the finest harbour in the West Indies, which had long served as an asylum to his flying squadrons; as giving us possession of an important colony, on which Bonaparte probably sets more than common value, either to be retained at a peace, or restored for some valuable equivalent; as placing within our power the patrimonial estate of Madame Bonaparte, with many of her relatives, and perhaps in consequence facilitating some arrangement that may put an end to the captivity of our countrymen so long detained in France; if, I say, from any of these considerations, or others which may have suggested themselves to the minds of His Majesty's ministers, they were induced to undertake this enterprise, I must admit that an object of such great national advantage ought not to be abandoned from a regard to the interests of any particular class of individuals. But I must also contend, that where the interests of any class of men are injured by measures adopted for the

general good, that class of men has a strong, nay, an unanswerable claim upon the legislature for relief. Whether the capture of Martinique, by bringing a new influx of sugars into the European market, will again plunge the British West-Indian planters into that distress from which they are just emerging, depends upon political events which it is impossible to foresee. But, should it produce that effect, I put in my claim to the justice and liberality of the legislature, and I will not weaken that claim by accepting as a boon what is in fact no boon; I will not sacrifice substantial for imaginary advantages, nor lose the substance by grasping at the shadow.

As in the part which I am about to take on this occasion, I have the misfortune to differ in opinion with many of the gentlemen with whom I generally act, I think it right to guard against any misconstructions that may be put on my conduct. No man, who is acquainted with my situation in life, can for a moment suspect me of harbouring any feelings inimical to the interests of the British West-Indian planters. On the contrary, my interests are bound up in theirs; *for the greatest part* of my property is invested in securities in the British West-Indian colonies. It is true that I have also connexions both at Martinique and at Guadaloupe; but, in point of extent, they bear no proportion to my other concerns. As far, therefore, as interest may be supposed to operate on the human mind, the British planters have an unquestionable pledge of my sincerity in their cause. It happens fortunately for my consistency, too, that, so long ago as the year 1792, I published the very same doctrines that I am about to maintain; in proof of which, I beg leave to read the following passage from a pamphlet respecting the sugar-trade, written at that period.

" It is granted that when charters were first given to encou-
" rage the settlement of the British islands, and owing to the
" infancy of their establishment, it was an expedient and ne-

" cessary encouragement to secure to them the exclusive sup-
" ply of the British market, by imposing such duties on foreign
" sugars as should amount to a prohibition. But now that
" their produce is more than adequate to the consumption of
" the mother-country, so that one-third part of it must be
" re-exported, and the price it will fetch in foreign markets
" must necessarily regulate the price of what is sold here, it
" is evident that this restriction can no longer be of use to
" them; that not Great Britain alone, but Europe is the
" market for sugars the British planter has to look up to; and
" that the demand from abroad must increase in proportion to
" the increased quantity; that, diverted from their markets,
" finds its way to ours, so as to keep the universal price at one
" common level."

The charge of inconsistency, therefore, cannot justly be brought against me; but how some of my West-Indian friends will rescue themselves from this imputation I am at a loss to imagine; for the great mass of evidence given by these very gentlemen, before the various committees of this house, which have been appointed to report upon West-India subjects within these few years past, goes to establish the proposition for which I contend, and which they now mean to oppose; namely, that it is the quantity of sugar brought to Europe that governs the price of the commodity in Great Britain. In the evidence given before the commercial committee, in 1807, this truth is laid down as an axiom; and the distress of the British planters is justly attributed to the quantity of sugar brought to Europe from the enemy's colonies in neutral ships. Now we are to be told, that it is not the bringing sugars to Europe, but the bringing them into the home-consumption of Great Britain, that is injurious to the interests of the British planter.

I shall not read the evidence given by any of the gentlemen

whom I see in their places, because I am unwilling to put my friends to the blush; and, therefore, I shall confine myself to the testimony of a gentleman, not a member of this house, but who stands high in the estimation of all those who know him, both for talents and for his application of those talents; a gentleman who thinks justly and thinks deeply. I mean Mr. Bosanquet. On being asked, to what causes do you principally impute the inadequacy of returns since 1801? he gives the following answer:—" I attribute it to an excess of importation beyond the home-consumption, which has rendered "the sale of the growers produce dependent on exportation, "not only for the consumption of the quantity, but, also, "for the price, which I conceive to be formed on a standard "inadequate to his expenses. I mean the market-price on "the continent, which market can be and is supplied with "sugar, at a cheaper rate than it can be grown by the British "planter, and, according to the axiom, that the price of a "commodity will entirely depend upon the price at which the "surplus can be sold, it is obvious that the market-price at "home has, ever since the importation materially exceeded "the home-consumption, been governed by the price on the "continent." These opinions, sir, so far from being controverted, are confirmed by the concurrent testimony of every gentleman connected with the West Indies, who was then examined to the same point.

The house may naturally wonder how it happens that gentlemen should think so differently on the same subject, at different periods; I can only observe, that the sentiments they formerly delivered were not given with a view to any particular circumstance likely to affect the home-consumption, and may, therefore, be considered as the genuine unbiassed sentiments of their minds. The sentiments they will now deliver are framed with a view to a particular circumstance, likely to

affect the home-consumption, and may, perhaps, have received a bias from that circumstance.

Perhaps there are few classes of men altogether free from certain prejudices, on points connected with their own interests. We are all apt to receive opinions into our minds, without due examination ; to take them as it were upon trust, particularly when they come to us with a sort of hereditary sanction, and thus it is that prejudices sometimes acquire the force of principles.

Men are so sensibly alive to their own interests, that if a measure is proposed which they know can do them no good, and fancy that it may, by any possibility however remote, do them harm, they will scarcely allow themselves to give it a fair and impartial discussion. An impression of this sort was lately very liberally got the better of by the landed interest, who consented to the substitution of sugar for grain in the distilleries ; though some few gentlemen contended, to the last, for the principle that the agriculture of the country ought never to be interfered with under any possible circumstances. This principle, however, as it was termed, could not be maintained ; for the real principle of all the corn-laws is founded upon an interference with the agriculture of the country, and sanctions the importation of foreign corn, whenever the price of British corn exceeds certain limits. It was, therefore, in strict conformity to that principle, that we resorted to substitution, when the means of importation were no longer in our power ; and, I trust, sir, that in future, whenever our own growth of corn is insufficient for our consumption, we shall give our fellow-subjects the preference over foreigners ; and if the situation of the West-Indian planter requires it, that instead of importing we shall continue to substitute.

The West-Indian planters are now, in their turn, contending

for the principle, as they call it, of the monopoly of the home consumption of Great Britain; but this principle has never been recognised to the extent to which they would push it; for the produce of the conquered colonies has uniformly been admitted into home-consumption. Even if this principle were acknowledged, it would be of no use to them in the present state of things, as I trust I shall shortly satisfy the house; and I must say, that it is with a peculiar ill-grace that they attempt to maintain prejudices of their own, at the very moment when they are reaping the most substantial advantages from having overcome the prejudices of otners.

The propositions I shall endeavour to establish, are these: that the exclusion of the produce of Martinique would be of no benefit whatever to the British planter, that this exclusion would be highly injurious to the British sugar-refiners; that it would be unjust to the inhabitants of Martinique, and a violation of honour and good faith on the part of the British Government.

I have already granted, sir, that, in the infancy of the British West-India settlements, the monopoly of the home-consumption of the mother-country was a most valuable privilege of the planter; but the advantages of this monopoly having been felt and acknowledged by our predecessors, we retain the same ideas of its importance, as were justly impressed upon their minds, without adverting to the change of circumstances that has taken place since their days. For many years past, the cultivation of the British West-India colonies has been so much extended, that the consumption of the mother-country has been insufficient to take off their produce; and a considerable proportion of their sugars has necessarily been re-exported. In this state of things, it is not Great Britain alone, but Europe at large, that the British planter must consider as his market. While sugar is dear upon the continent,

it never can long continue to be cheap in Great Britain, nor when it is cheap upon the continent can it long be dear in Great Britain; for the price which the surplus will produce for exportation, regulates the price of what is sold for home-consumption. If the British market is depressed below the standard of the continental markets, the foreign buyer finds it his interest to purchase, and continues so to do as long as it will afford him a profit on exportation. When this competition ceases, as the importation exceeds the home-consumption, the stock accumulates, and as the value of every commodity depends on the proportion which the supply bears to the demand, the price falls, till it becomes the interest of the foreign buyer to purchase as before. Perhaps the action and re-action of the British and continental markets on each other, may be best illustrated by a familiar example. Many gentlemen who hear me have, doubtless, occasionally been at some of the watering-places on the coast of Kent or Sussex, and may have observed, that when the fishing-boats belonging to those places have a favourable wind for getting up to London, fish is very scarce and dear, but that when the wind is contrary, and they cannot get up to London, the fish is cheap and abundant. The London market is to those places with respect to fish, just what the continental market is to Great Britain with respect to sugars. When there is a demand for the continent, sugar uniformly becomes dear and scarce in Great Britain; when there is none, it becomes cheap and abundant; and all the fluctuations in the price of British plantation-sugar, sold for home-consumption, are occasioned by the demand or want of demand for exportation.

I may state, in farther proof of this proposition, that the value of foreign sugars, brought to Great Britain for exportation, is, generally speaking, precisely the same as that of British plantation-sugar imported for home-consumption, with

the difference of duty only. Within my memory, I have known but one exception to this general rule; and that is one of those exceptions which do not weaken, but confirm it. After the act was passed last year, substituting the use of sugar for that of corn in the distilleries, British plantation-sugar became 10*s*. per cwt. dearer than foreign sugar, exclusive of the duty, for it was then thought, that the distilleries and the home-consumption would consume all the British plantation-sugar, and leave the planters independent of the foreign market. But this expectation has since proved fallacious; more than 40,000 hogsheads still remain in the West-India-docks, now that the new crop is on the eve of arrival; and the disclosure of this fact, together with the capture of Martinique, has occasioned a fall in the price of British plantation-sugar of from 12*s*. to 14*s*. per cwt. The value of foreign sugars, on the contrary, has remained nearly stationary, and the prices of both are again restored to their usual equilibrium, now that the dependance of the British planter upon exportation is clearly ascertained. If the arguments I have before adduced fail in convincing those who hear me, this fact establishes the truth of the proposition for which I contend, beyond all possibility of contradiction.

I admit, sir, that if His Majesty's ministers, at the commencement of the present war, had adopted the plan of excluding the produce of all conquered colonies from British consumption, they would have given a most important advantage to the British planter, because the home-consumption and the distilleries would, in that case, have rendered him independent of the foreign market. But we have captured French settlements, Dutch settlements, Danish settlements, and have admitted the whole of the produce to home-consumption, to an extent that now puts this independence entirely out of the question, as will appear by adverting to the amount of our

exports. In 1807, we exported 95,000 hogsheads of sugar; in 1808 we exported about 50,000, and had, also, the benefit of the distilleries; notwithstanding which, a surplus of 40,000 hogsheads remains on hand. As, therefore, it is now impossible to prevent our dependence on the foreign market, and the sugars of Martinique must, at all events, come to Europe, the excluding them alone from home-consumption will be of no advantage whatever to the British planter.

I farther admit that if a total stop could be put to the exportation of sugar, any addition to the quantity imported for home-consumption would affect the price, and prejudice the interests of the British planter; and this is the only case that I can figure to my imagination, in which the admission of the Martinique sugars in the accustomed mode could be made the subject of a reasonable objection. But experience has now so clearly demonstrated the inefficacy of the decrees of Bonaparte, to prevent our commercial communication with the continent, that I consider this as an impossible case; and surely the legislature will not think of providing against impossible cases, and overlooking those which actually exist.

But however fallacious the idea may be, of the British planter deriving any advantage from the exclusion of the Martinique sugars from the home-consumption of Great Britain, there are other parties, too, whose interests have strong claims to the attention of the legislature, to whom this measure is pregnant with the most serious injury. I shall mention, in the first place, the sugar-refiners of Great Britain. An act was lately passed, permitting the exportation of refined sugar in a crushed state, so as to imitate the French clayed sugars; and nearly two-thirds of the whole quantity of refined sugar exported during the last year has been of that description; but if the clayed sugars of Martinique are imported for exportation alone, they will supply the place of those crushed lumps on

the continent, and the British plantation-sugars, from which they are now made, will necessarily be left a dead weight upon the home-market. Now I cannot readily comprehend how the price of sugar would be more depressed, by bringing these clayed sugars into the home-market, than by leaving those raw sugars upon the market, which are now manufactured in imitation of them, and exported.

The clayed sugars of Martinique are peculiarly calculated for making a certain description of refined sugar, known by the name of Hambro' loaves, which circulate all over the continent with the greater facility in the present state of things, from being made in such moulds as are used at Hambro', and it being, therefore, impossible to distinguish them from the goods of the foreign refiners. If then we send away the Martinique clayed sugars, we send away this branch of the manufacture also, from the British refiners to the foreign refiners.

The three principal descriptions of refined sugar now exported, are the crushed lumps, the Hambro' loaves, and the double refined loaves; the two former being four-fifths of the whole quantity. If we export all the Martinique clayed sugars, they would supersede the demand for the crushed lumps, as foreigners will prefer the originals to the copies; and they will also supersede the demand for the Hambro' loaves, as we shall give the foreign refiners the exclusive right of using the choicest and best materials from which they can be manufactured. Thus the export trade of the British sugar-refiner will be reduced to one-fifth of its actual amount, by the operation of this bill; and nearly one-third of the refineries, at present at work, in this metropolis, will be *thrown* out of employment.

It may be here proper to say a few words on the value and importance of the sugar-refinery to this country. The buildings and utensils employed in that manufactory occupy a

capital of about two millions of money, exclusive of a much larger capital necessary for carrying it on. The annual expenditure of the sugar refiners amounts to about one million, and perhaps scarcely any million of money is expended by any set of men in a manner so beneficial to this country, it being principally expended in giving value to the produce of our mines—coals, lead, iron, and copper; and in furnishing employment to a great number of artificers, manufacturers, and workmen of various descriptions. Some idea may be formed of the employment furnished to the potteries by the refiners, when I state that 80,000 pots and moulds may be found in a single sugar-house in this metropolis; and that a very large proportion of the whole quantity in use is annually consumed by breakage. This manufactory possesses an advantage of which few can boast; that both the raw material it works up, and all the articles used in carrying it on, are the growth, produce, and manufacture, either of Great Britain or her colonies, so that the whole amount of the exports made by the sugar-refiners to foreign markets, is a contribution levied upon foreigners by British industry, and an accession to British wealth.

Is it possible that His Majesty's ministers can contemplate this picture, and seriously resolve to destroy this valuable manufacture? Can they deem it consistent with sound policy to drive the refiners to the extremity of transporting themselves, their capital, and their industry to foreign countries, as must be the case, if we deprive them of their accustomed employment here, by giving that encouragement to the foreign refineries, which they ought to secure to their own?

With respect to the gentlemen connected with the British West-India colonies, who urge His Majesty's ministers to this rash step, men too, in other respects, of intelligent and enlarged minds, I am really astonished at their contracted notions in this particular case. They are, I believe, the first set of men who

ever devised, as a contrivance for raising the value of a raw commodity, the ruin of those by whom it is manufactured. Can any idea more erroneous, I must say, more preposterous, be possibly conceived? They remind me of the short-sighted policy of the man in the fable, who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

In another point of view, the exporting the clayed sugars of Martinique to the continent, instead of refining them here for exportation, will be a great national loss; for, by refining those sugars, we add very materially to their value. The balance of exchange is now so much against Great Britain, that the guinea is not worth more than 17*s.* on any part of the continent; and government feels this depreciation very heavily in the purchase of every article of naval stores procured from the Baltic, as well as in the bills necessarily drawn for subsidies to our foreign allies, and for the maintenance of our armies on foreign service.

When the alternative is laid before us, either to diminish or increase this evil, by diminishing or increasing the value of our exports, can we hesitate how to decide?

The inhabitants of Martinique are also parties to this cause, and have a right to be considered in this discussion. I am aware it may be said, that the privilege of having their produce admitted to the home-consumption of Great Britain can be an object of no consequence to them, if the price of sugar be just the same, whether it be sold for exportation or home-consumption. But, I would ask, are men influenced by pecuniary considerations alone? Have they no feelings of any other description? Even in the most trifling cases, no man is satisfied to be put on a worse footing than his neighbour. If he does not feel a distinction made to his disadvantage as an injury, he considers it as an insult, and resents it still more strongly. Can it be expected that the inhabitants of Marti-

nique will contentedly endure, that while the produce of every other West India colony conquered by Great Britain during the present war, is admitted to her home-consumption, their produce alone should be excluded? Will they not ask what they have done, that, like Cain, they should be branded with a mark of opprobrium, and treated as a stigmatised race? But, unfortunately for the effect that this measure may be expected to produce on their minds, it so happened, that when the island was captured, that temporary difference between the price of sugar for home-consumption and exportation, to which I have already adverted, did exist, and therefore they will consider the distinction, not as an imaginary but as a real grievance. Besides, they will be naturally led to conclude, from the strenuous opposition made by the British planters to the admission of their sugars for home-consumption, that the object is worth contending for; and therefore this argument cuts both ways.

The claim of the inhabitants of Martinique to the privilege of which this bill would deprive them, might safely be rested on the ground of established law, custom, and usage, all which are uniformly in their favour; for innovations ought not to be lightly adopted, and the *onus probandi*, the proof of the policy or necessity of such innovations, rests upon those by whom they are proposed.

C

THE following is an extract from the Report of a Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, dated 23d November, 1804; presented to the House of Commons 25th February, 1805.

After speaking, at great length, of "the dangerous and distressful situation to which the West-Indian colonists are reduced," the Report thus proceeds:—

"In showing the impossibility of continuing the cultivation of sugar, under the present duties on that article and on rum, we have chosen to appeal to facts, well known and easily verified in Great Britain, rather than rest our case on the fatal consequences produced and *passing before our eyes here. Every British merchant, holding securities on real estates, is filing bills in Chancery to foreclose, although, when he has obtained a decree, he hesitates to enforce it, because he must himself become proprietor of the plantation, of which, from fatal experience, he knows the consequences. No one will advance money to relieve those whose debts approach half the value of their property, nor even lend a moderate sum without a judgement in ejectment, and release of errors, that, at a moment's notice, he may take out a writ of possession, and enter on the plantation of his unfortunate debtor. Sheriff's officers and collectors of the internal taxes are every where offering for sale the property of individuals who have seen better days, and now must view their effects purchased for half their real value, and less than half the original costs. Far from having the reversion expected, the creditor is often not satisfied: all kind of credit is at an end. If litigation in the courts of common*

law has diminished, it is not from increased ability to perform contracts, but from confidence having ceased, and no man parting with property but for an immediate payment of the consideration. A faithful detail would have the appearance of a frightful caricature. Unless speedy and efficacious means are adopted for giving permanent relief by a radical change of measures, we must suppose that the West-Indian islands are doomed to perish as useless appendages of the British Empire. Can the colonies perish alone? and will not the statesman, whose measures shall complete their ruin, precipitate, into the same abyss, the manufactures and commerce of the parent state?"*

I have before me another Report of the same Assembly, dated the 13th November, 1807, and presented to the House of Commons on the 13th April, 1808, which is drawn up in a similar strain.—It states, "the melancholy fact," that the gradual depreciation of sugar had, at last, operated, "not only to deprive the planter, generally speaking, of any interest whatever on his capital, but to oblige him, if he continue the cultivation of the sugar-cane, to do it at a considerable actual loss." "This, however, is not all: the planter must maintain himself and his family, and he ought, at least, to pay the interest of his debts." "Instead of being enriched by his labour," the planter is described as actually "considerably impoverished by it."

The Report then goes on to enumerate sixty-five sugar-estates that had been thrown up, "the proprietors of which are some of them reduced to ruin, and others subjected to

* And yet the same Report is filled with the most vehement and angry remonstrances against the attempts then making to abolish the slave-trade, as grossly unjust; as *a violation of the most sacred rights of West Indians*; as *destructive of their interests*, &c. This is something like infatuation.

very great loss ;" thirty-two sugar-estates which have been sold under decrees from the Court of Chancery ; and one hundred and fifteen more, " respecting which suits are now depending in the Court of Chancery ;" besides many more bills which they knew were " preparing for the sale of sugar-estates." " From all these facts," it is added, " the House will be able to judge *to what an alarming extent the distresses of the sugar-planters have already reached, and with what accelerated rapidity they are now increasing ; for the sugar-estates* LATELY *thrown up, brought to sale, and now in the Court of Chancery in this island and in England, amount to about one-fourth of the whole number in the colony.*" The Report then proceeds to state that, when the average-price of sugar, exclusive of duty, is 45*s.* per cwt. the planter will have an interest of 2½ per cent. on his capital; when it is 52*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. 4$\frac{4}{7}$ per cent.; when it is 60*s.* per cwt. 7 per cent.; and when it is 70*s.* 3*d.* per cwt. he will have 10 per cent. on his capital ; and the framers of the Report give it as their opinion that it ought not *in justice* to be less than this last sum ; and that to that point measures should be taken, by the legislature, to raise it. This is the summary remedy for West-Indian distress !! As compared with the present price of sugar, it would inflict a tax of five millions annually on this country !!

D.

It would, perhaps, be unfair to withhold from the planter the benefit of a defence which he prudently forbears to bring forward for himself, but the full consideration of which, in the body of the pamphlet, would too much interrupt the course of the argument. The defence is this: He is for the most part so heavily encumbered with debt, that, however beneficial a change of system might be to the slaves, and to the permanent interests of the property, it would probably be ruinous to himself. To reduce his scale of sugar-culture and his crops of exportable produce would preclude the hope of keeping down the interest of his incumbrances, and progressively lessening their amount. The mortgagee, therefore, would foreclose, or sell his equity of redemption. He is consequently in the painful dilemma of being obliged, either to stint his slaves in the food and other necessaries which he is too poor to purchase in sufficient quantities, or to lose his estate by reducing his consignments of sugar; and this is the true cause of the evil in general; and what is, in fact, meant by the poverty of the planters being a cause of famine to the slaves. But what effectual remedy would be found for this by raising the price of produce, through the ruin of our East-Indian trade, or any other means that could possibly be employed for that purpose? It is not the positive, but the relative magnitude of a planter's income that thus affects his slaves. It is its amount in relation to the interest and other charges that it must annually defray. His ability to sustain his slaves depends not merely on what he receives, but what he has to pay out of the proceeds of his sugar; not on the credit side of his account with the consignees, but on its favourable balance. It is to

no purpose, therefore, to raise the proceeds of his sugar 50 per cent. if his incumbrances exceed his improved income in the same proportion. Now it is a notorious and undeniable truth, that a large part of the whole number of sugar-estates in the West Indies are at all times, even when the price of their produce in the European markets is high, greatly overburthened with debt; and this, not always from the imprudence of the proprietors in point of expenditure during their residence in Europe, but because the estates have descended upon them subject to heavy incumbrances, or have, from some of the many vicissitudes to which such property is liable, greatly fallen off in their productiveness, or, what is a still more common cause of the evil, have been bought at too high a price, or in more favourable times, and, as usual, mortgaged to secure to the sellers a large proportion of the purchase-money. It may truly be said that in this latter respect high prices of sugar are commonly, in their future consequences, and that at no distant period, a severe source of calamity instead of benefit to the slaves; for they create an appetite for colonial speculations, and there are always a great number of proprietors who, from necessity, or from their desire to convert into European investments property of which they well know the precarious nature, are ready to avail themselves of such good opportunities of selling to advantage. Estates, therefore, are often sold in such times, at prices very far exceeding their value in relation to their ordinary or average returns; and their new owners set out under a burthen of debt which they vainly hope the proceeds will enable them progressively to discharge. Market-prices soon after fall, expenses increase, the debts accumulate with rapidity, and when embarrassment and ruin ensue, they are ascribed to the depreciation of produce instead of the over-appreciation of the estate, and the rashness of having speculated deeply on what was chiefly a borrowed capital. The

case is exactly parallel to that of very many landholders in this country, who gave large prices for land when our wheat-markets and rents were at the highest, and raised great part of the purchase-money by mortgage, without any other means for its repayment than the returns of the land itself. The prices of sugar, during the seven years that preceded 1801, had risen to a degree as unprecedented as the prices of corn previous to 1813, and the consequences have been the same in both cases, except that in England the purchase of land upon credit has been of a very limited extent compared to the whole extent of landed property; while in the West Indies a very large proportion of the sugar-estates now in culture have been the subjects of such speculations. It has been asserted over and over again, by West Indians themselves, that most of the estates in the old islands have changed hands in the last thirty years; and as to the new settlements in Guiana and Trinidad, it is notorious that they have been chiefly formed by adventurers whose cupidity high prices had excited. The lands there indeed were cheap, but the slaves were chiefly bought, and the buildings erected, by means of commercial credit obtained upon mortgage on high terms.

With the landholders of England the case is entirely new; but not so with the West-Indian planters. The high prices of the period referred to gave, indeed, a more than ordinary impulse to the adventurous spirit by which sugar-estates are purchased or formed; but at all times the tickets in that lottery have changed hands with great rapidity, and have always been bought at an extravagant price when compared with their intrinsic value, or average produce. Ruin, consequently, has at all times been the final, and generally the speedy fate of a majority of the adventurers. If the latter proposition is doubted, many testimonies of its truth might be adduced from the colonists and the assemblies themselves. Some of these

will be found in the preceding article of the Appendix. I will only at present cite one other as it is given by Mr. Wilberforce, in a letter to his constituents, published in 1807, p. 268; being taken by him from a Parliamentary document, transmitted by the Assembly of Jamaica. The number of executions in the Marshall's office of that island in twenty years, from 1760 to 1780, was no less than 80,000, and their amount £32,500,000 of Jamaica currency, or £22,500,000 sterling; and during that time nearly half the estates in the island had changed hands.

Now, what I would infer from these colonial statistics is, that if the embarrassments of the planters produce distress or famine among their slaves, it is an evil not to be remedied by raising the price of sugar; nor is it an evil of the present day alone, but one of perennial existence, and inherent to the colonial system. As long as the state of the slaves compels them to work for any subsistence, adequate or inadequate, that the master chooses to allow, there is no preventing him, when a losing gamester, from taking a last throw at the table, in the attempt to save himself from ruin, by finding a last stake in what he can possibly save out of the maintenance of his slaves, by reducing them to short allowance.* Unless you

* In accordance with this view of the subject is the statement of the Jamaica House of Assembly itself, in its report of the 23d November, 1804. "We may here observe," the assembly says, "that it is to this peculiarity (a peculiarity previously described) of sugar-cultivation, that much of the augmented production is owing. *Far from being, in all cases, a symptom of prosperity, extending plantations is not unfrequently a paroxysm of despair.* Seeing that unless his estate can be brought up to a certain scale, no profit can be expected; the planter borrows to the utmost of his credit, attains, at last, the quantity looked for, but has the mortification to find that a new duty and increased price place him in the same distressed situation from which he had made a struggle to emerge." And all this is stated in the midst of vehement remonstrances against the abolition of the slave-trade.

can save him from this dangerous temptation by preventing his contracting debts beyond the average value of his estate, it is to no purpose to augment his income. Let his crops produce £500 a year more than at present, still, if he adds £10,000 to his mortgages, or sells the estate to a new adventurer at that advance of price, the case will remain the same as far as it affects the slaves. Nor has a sinking planter always the present power of saving those poor dependants from want, unless by immediately calling on his mortgagees to accept possession of the estate. His credit in the island may be so far gone that he cannot obtain flour from the merchants. The case is so familiar, that the General Legislature of the Leeward Islands, convened in 1798, (a time, be it observed, of great prosperity, and after years of high prices of sugar unexampled before,) thought it necessary, in common humanity, to make a law to provide a remedy for the evil. They enacted that debts contracted for food or other necessaries for the slaves, by the party in possession, should be paid out of the crops of the estate itself, and be a charge upon them. Nothing could be more equitable and wise; but the law, it seems, has already become obsolete in the islands it was made for, and has never been adopted by the assembly of any other colony. The master's choice, therefore, is not necessary to the starvation of the labourers, while the produce of their labour goes into the pockets of those mortgagees to whom they virtually belong.

Nothing but the compulsory effect of low prices of sugar, which, as I have already shown, will lead to the raising provisions on the estate, can remedy that cruel abuse which high prices are preposterously supposed entirely to prevent.

THE END.

Marchant, Printer, Ingram-court, Fenchurch street

ON PROTECTION TO WEST-INDIA SUGAR.

"Cheapness of consumption and increase of production are the two great
"objects of all political economy."

A. SMITH'S WEALTH OF NATIONS, vol. iii. p. 134, 8vo ed.

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED AND ENLARGED,

AND CONTAINING

AN ANSWER TO A PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

"A REPLY,"

&c &c.

BY JOSEPH MARRYAT, ESQ. M.P.

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1823

MARCHANT, Printer, Ingram-Court, Fenchurch-Street

ON

PROTECTION

TO

WEST-INDIA SUGAR.

The expediency of equalizing the duties on sugar imported from the East and West Indies has now been canvassed during two successive years. We are approaching the session of Parliament in which an examination of the question in all its bearings is to be undertaken by a Committee of the House of Commons, it is therefore most important that right ideas upon the subject should be formed, and that it should not hastily be thrown aside, as a measure interesting only to East and West India merchants, and unworthy of the deliberate at-

tention of the legislature. I am no advocate for conferring a partial benefit either on the East or West Indians, but I am an advocate for competition, and for giving equal encouragement to both parties, because I am convinced that by so doing the true interests of both, as well as of the empire at large, will be best promoted. In this question are involved the two following propositions:—

1st. Whether the sound principles of commerce which have superseded the erroneous theories of the old mercantile system (and to which our government themselves are converts*) shall be adopted or abandoned, according to the prevalence of particular interests in parliament.

2d. Whether this country shall act with justice to the immense population of the East Indies, placed by Providence under its protection, or yield in one essential point—to the fears and jealousies of the planters and merchants of the West Indies.

* See the recent official publication on the State of the Nation, *January*, 1823, p. 150 and 203.

I hope to be able, in this short exposition of the subject, to show that, as statesmen and legislators, it is our best policy, and, as masters of a great empire, it is our bounden duty to admit so material a production of India as sugar into the home-consumption of Great Britain upon an equal footing with the sugar of any other British dependency.

It is only since the year 1813 that the real advantages to be derived from India have *become apparent*; the incongruous characters of merchant and sovereign, blended, so unfortunately both for India and Great Britain, in the East-India Company, had till that time paralized the exertions of both countries mutually to benefit each other. The triumph of just commercial principles, by the experience of the free trade since 1813, has been complete. Many things yet remain to be done, and the two characters must ultimately be separated. Much, however, as I appreciate the value of free trade, little as I indulge any fears for the safety of the China trade, under an unrestricted intercourse, yet I would agree to con-

tinue the monopoly of the tea-trade in the Company if its political existence can be shown to depend upon it, and if the question lay between the maintenance of that monopoly and the extinction of the Company, and the consequent transfer of its political functions to Government; for in our mixed constitution the administration of India is too valuable a source of patronage to be trusted to the executive; and, with some modifications, that function can hardly be placed in better hands than those of the Court of Directors, checked by the Board of Control, and, under the system of gradual advancement in the service, which now so happily prevails. Several improvements, however, before this great question can be brought forward, on the expiration of the charter, are yet to be made. The Indian shipping has a right to a general British register:—policy and justice equally demand the concession of this point, in spite of the jealousy of the shipping-interest at home. Again, British shipping of all classes ought to enjoy without restriction the whole trade eastward of the

Cape, (the direct China trade, until the expiration of the charter, excepted,) and vessels of all sizes should be admitted freely into that commerce.

The laws regulating the *commerce* of the East should be separated from those relating to the *government* of British India, and their provisions so simplified and consolidated that the merchant may not be impeded by the intricacy of the present ill-digested system. The basis of the commercial law *should be free trade with exceptions*, not a *close trade with permissions*. This is due to the interests of our mercantile and manufacturing classes at home and in India. No pains should be spared to correct the errors of the landed-system of India—to prevent the impoverishment and degradation of that country by oppressive taxation:—and dismissing idle fears of colonization, the Court of Directors should boldly repair the evils * incident to their

* Evils of no common magnitude, and allowed by Mr. C. Grant.—See C. Grant on the State and Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, 1792, 1797, p. 23, *et passim*

connexion with India, and afford every facility to the development of the great resources of the country under their charge. If superior civilization and knowledge and a higher tone of character have enabled a handful of foreigners to achieve the conquest of India, let *these* advantages be diffused over British India; — allow Englishmen to fix themselves in the country, and thereby increase the wealth, raise the character, and enlarge the prosperity of the natives. Under the superintendence of a vigilant and settled government there is nothing to apprehend, and without the assistance of Europeans none of the great staples of India can be brought to perfection. But leaving to others the consideration of these more general subjects, I shall confine myself to the sugar-question, which in principle yields to none in importance.

The simple fact of the case is as follows:—

The consumption of sugar in Great Britain is about three millions of cwt. or nearly 150,000 tons per annum. Of this supply not above

6,600 tons have hitherto been brought from India.*

Now the power of producing sugars in India to almost any extent is fully proved by the papers laid before the proprietors of East-India stock by the Court of Directors, and may be estimated from the following extract of one of the ablest writers on the husbandry of Bengal, viz "From Benares to Rungpur, from the borders of Assam to those of Catack there is scarcely a district in Bengal, or its dependent provinces, wherein the sugar cane does not flourish; it thrives most especially in the provinces of Benares Behar, Rungpur Berhoom, Berdwan, and Medinpur; it is successfully cultivated in all, and there seems to be no other bounds to the possible production of sugar in Bengal than the limits of the demand and consequent vend for it.† Whence, then, does it

* 1822 Total import 13,000 tons, of which home consumption is 6,600 tons.

† Colebrooke on the Husbandry of Bengal p 127, edition 1806 and throughout the Report laid before the pro

arise that so small a portion of India sugar finds its way into the consumption of Great Britain? The cause may be traced to the protecting duty.

The duty of 30s. per cwt., reducible according to the average gazette-prices to 27s. per cwt. levied on an article like sugar, varying in quality, and consequently in value, from 10s. to 50s. per cwt. is a most oppressive burden—an unwise and impolitic tax, injuring the people by narrowing the consumption, without benefiting, in proportion, the revenue; but when, in addition to this heavy impost, which applies to sugars of every growth, a preference, to the extent of one-third at least, or 10s. additional, per cwt. is given to the West Indians, the burden to the East Indies becomes intolerable; and the question to be considered is—whether it is just and expedient that this preference should continue.

prietors of East-India stock, it may be seen that in the opinion of some of the ablest commercial servants the cultivation of sugar in Bengal affords the most profitable return to the agriculturist.

Now I am prepared to show that this preference, crippling the trade with India, and impeding the natural course of the interchange of the commodities of the two countries, is injurious to

the British ship-owner and merchant,
the British refiner,
the British manufacturer,
the British consumer,

and is a sacrifice of the rights of our fellow subjects in India.

The West Indians assert their *claim* to *such a* preference, however injurious to others. They appeal to their *rights* under the Colonial System, sanctioned by successive acts of the legislature.

This claim of right must first be examined, for, if that stands, honesty being paramount to all questions of expediency, the pledged faith of parliament must be supported, until the existing interests of every person in the West Indies are satisfied; remove this, and conflicting views of expediency alone remain to be considered. The claims of the West

Indies, on the head of expediency, may be ranged, as follows:—

1st. Probable loss on capital invested in the West Indies.

2d. Probable injury to the slaves.

3d. Importance of the West Indies, as a means of naval strength and commercial wealth.

Prescriptive Right of the West Indians under the Colonial System.

To put the question in the strongest light, let us suppose the West Indians to contend that they have planted, cultivated, and invested large capitals in sugar plantations, under compact with the legislature that, if they brought all their produce to the home-market, and purchased all their supplies from thence, the home-market should be secured to them.

But where are the records of their title?—Great Britain was first supplied with sugar through the Portuguese. The price was exorbitant, and encouragement was given, in the

nature of a patent, to cultivate the West Indies. From 1649 to the present time, the chief supply has been from the West Indies; but when the price was high, in 1792, and again in 1800, cultivation in the East Indies was called for and encouraged by Parliament and Government, and importations proportionate to the Company's operations, under an exclusive monopoly, took place.

The article was not enumerated in the table of customs, but the question of the duty (£37 : 16 : 3 per cent. *ad valorem*) was agitated during that period, as will be seen by the resolutions moved and carried in the General Court, 15th March, 1792.

From 1787, the duty remained, *ad valorem*, £37 : 16 : 3 per cent. until 1797, when an additional 2*s*. 6*d*. per cwt. was imposed, but applied to the East and West India sugars alike. In 1803, the system was altered;* the

* 43 Geo. III. cap. 68. So far from the competition of the East Indies not being contemplated by all parties in 1803, under the new scale of duties, I may refer to the Report of the House of Assembly in Jamaica, in Nov.

ad valorem duty was changed into a rated duty, and 27s. per cwt. fixed on East-India sugars of *all growths* and *qualities*, as a *mean rate between* the duty of 24s per cwt. on West India brown sugars, and 29s. on West India white sugars, and, in 1809, the same proportions were preserved.

East-India of all growths and qualities,	33s.
West-India, brown	30s.
West-India, white.	35s

Does this look like the peremptory exclusion of all sugars from the market except those from the West Indies? Have those who speculated in the West-India plantations under these regulations of the legislature, a right to turn round now, and say—Oh, we trusted to the supineness of the Company, and we knew they never would send home any quantity to affect us in the home-market? Surely this is private speculation on private judgement, not on the pledged faith of the legislature. Surely, the assertion so confidently made of

1804, to prove that this competition was a subject of serious alarm and complaint

East-India sugar never having been intended by the legislature to enter into competition with West-India sugar antecedent to the year 1813, cannot now be maintained.*

In 1813, when the free trade was opened, a protection of 10*s*. per cwt. was given to the West Indians against East-India sugars, as follows:

East-India sugars, of all growths and qualities	40*s*.
West-India, brown or Muscovado	30*s*.
West-India, white or clayed	35*s*.

Here the matter rested; but it is curious to trace the gradual encroachments of the West Indians and their infractions of their own bargain.

1st. They re-agitated the question, and attempted to impose an additional duty of 2*s*. 6*d*. per cwt. on brown East-India sugar, and 7*s*. 6*d*. on white.

2d. They obtained a separation of growth, and without any compassion upon those who, on the faith of Parliament, had invested capital

* See the Amount of Company's Importations, Appendix iv. Co. Rep. page 74.

in Java, and in the country trade of India, of which sugar is the staple growth and chief medium, prohibitory duties were imposed on the consumption of all sugars from the East Indies, except such as had a certificate of origin, proving them to be the production of the British territories.

3d. They obtained a classification of qualities---Because a custom-house distinction existed in West-India sugars, and the highest duty of 35s. per cwt. stood against white or clayed West-India sugars, they proposed and obtained a similar distinction in East-India sugars, and an additional protection of 5s. altogether 15s. per cwt. on sugars from the East Indies clayed, or otherwise refined, so as to be equal to clayed, although there is not in India, as in the West Indies, a particular class of Sugar called *clayed*,* and, for want of a definite standard, to determine what India sugars are equal to clayed, it was almost certain that this additional duty would (however contrary to the letter and spirit of the act) be attempted to be levied on Bengal

* See Appendix (3).

white sugars, inferior to many West-India Muscovado sugars in grain, consequently less adapted to the refiners, and selling at lower prices, and which has proved to be the fact. This measure (the British West Indies producing no clayed sugars) has actually saddled the finer Bengal sugars with a prohibitory duty, and thus protected West-India Muscovado,* under cover of protecting clayed; and to this deception, arising from the technical language of the act, the Board of Trade and the Treasury have, from the superior influence of West Indians, most unaccountably lent themselves.

Does this look like keeping to a bargain, or paying any great deference to an alleged parliamentary contract?

And, 4th. Though it was expressly declared that the protecting duty was in consequence of the restrictions imposed on the West Indies by the colonial system, yet in the last session of parliament the West Indians procured a relax-

* Improved, so as to be superior to many clayed sugars, and yet literally not within the act.

ation of this system, without allowing a deduction of one farthing from the protecting duties.

After this statement can any reasonable man require the East Indians to be bound by the alleged compact of 1813, a compact got up between the West-India Committee and the delegates from Liverpool, then soliciting the open trade to the outports; but to which neither the East-India Company nor the East-India Trade, generally, were in any manner parties? It was first broken by the West Indians, and its character and operations were essentially changed, at their instance, and for their benefit.* After this, I think, the claim under the faith of Parliament

* It is fair to observe here, that this is now denied by the West Indians; they shift the request to the ship-owners; but they seem to have accepted the boon, in the true spirit of *nolo episcopari*; and few will give credit to the assertion, that it was forced upon them, without their solicitation. What view does the official writer take of this point? "Such," says he, "in a few words, was the BOON of "Government to the *West Indies* during the last session." —Administration of the Affairs of Great Britain, 1823, p. 140.

cannot be entertained for one moment. I would here ask, what has been the policy of the legislature with regard to sugar from the conquered colonies? If the old British West-India islands had a right to the exclusion of East-India sugar from the home-market, much more had they a right to insist on the exclusion of sugar from the conquered colonies. But what is the fact? The sugars of the Dutch West-India conquered colonies* are

* See Mr. Marryat's speech, 1819, in Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiv. page 82.

"The West-India planters are now, in their turn, contending for the principle, as they call it, of the monopoly of the home-consumption of Great Britain; but this principle has never been recognized to the extent to which they would push it; for the produce of the conquered colonies has uniformly been admitted into home-consumption. Even if this principle was acknowledged, it would be of no use to them in the present state of things, as, I trust, I shall shortly satisfy the house; and, I must say, that it is with peculiar ill grace that they attempt to maintain prejudices of their own, at the very moment when they are reaping the most substantial advantages from having overcome the prejudices of others."

admitted upon the same duties as those from the old West-India islands. The Mauritius is the only exception, and, though equally a sugar colony, is sacrificed to the jealousy of the West Indians: and whilst every motive of justice and policy should induce our government to conciliate the French inhabitants, by giving them a vent for their only produce, yet, the high duty is imposed on their sugars, which are driven from France by a duty to protect Bourbon sugar, and from England to protect the British West Indies. The Mauritius sugars are, to the ruin of the trade with Great Britain, sent to every port in Europe but those to which they would in the natural course of trade be attracted.

In 1809, there was, indeed, an Act brought in to exclude the clayed sugars of Martinique, which passed, notwithstanding the able and sound argument of an eminent West-India merchant, Mr. Marryat, in opposition to the measure But, in 1814, upon the restoration of this island to France, by another legislative provision, those sugars were admitted to April, 1815, at

the same duties as British West-India sugars. The produce of Demerara is yearly increasing.* It now exceeds the largest supply hitherto brought from India; and yet Demerara merchants are actually joined with the West-India planters of the old colonies, and crying out for protection against the East Indies.

Let us next see what were the alleged grievances of the colonial system, and to what extent the British West Indies are, at present, affected by them:

1st. The obligation imposed on the colonies of bringing all their produce to the mother-country, thereby increasing the cost of that portion which was beyond the home-consumption, by the charges of transit, and preventing its entering into competition, on equal terms, with

* Imports of Demerara and Berbice Sugars:

	Cwt		Cwt
1796	11,660	1817–18	391,954
1800	51,194	1818–19	437,950
1814–15	244,307	1819–20	510,900
1815–16	330,417	1820–21	574,257
1816–17	338,751	1821–22	545,403

the produce of other sugar-colonies and countries, shipped direct to the foreign place of consumption.

2d. The obligation under which they were bound to purchase supplies from the mother-country, both for the purposes of their cultivation and the support of the negro-population.

These two main grievances are removed by the Acts of last session for regulating the trade of the West Indies with America and other parts of the world. The produce of the West Indies may be carried direct to its place of consumption; for instance, rum to America, and sugar to the continent of Europe; and the supplies for the negroes, and lumber and other articles for the sugar manufacture, may be brought back direct from the place of production. But this must be done in direct trade only, and in British ships, or, as far as the trade with independent America is concerned, in American ships;—and what practical grievance is this? what freights are cheaper?

But the population of the West Indies must be supplied with British manufactures only; and

where again is the practical grievance here? what manufactures are cheaper than the British? do not the British manufacturers undersell all others in the East and the West? and are they not excluded from the continent, because they undersell the foreign manufacturer at his own door?

If duties are charged in the West Indies on foreign shipments, so are they charged in British India; and advantages are given to shipping on British ships direct to Great Britain.

Let it not be understood that any objection is here offered to this alteration in the colonial system; but it is broadly contended that the remaining restrictions on the West-India trade do not warrant, in any manner, a continuance of their monopoly of the home-market for sugar, upon the grounds of justice or the pledged faith of the legislature. The terms of the alleged contract are broken, and the West Indians no longer bring *all* their produce to the mother-country, nor receive *all* their supplies from thence.

I am decidedly of opinion that entire freedom should be given to the West Indies:—to allow the East Indies to enter into competition, on equal terms, is all that is asked in return.

Having, then, disposed of the first point, viz. the compact with Parliament, let us next advert to,

2dly. The expediency of the case. Is it, or is it not, expedient for the whole community, that the West Indies should have the exclusive supply of sugar to the home-market? Let us first show, in entering into this branch of the subject, that the monopoly is highly detrimental to the trade with India, and unjust towards its numerous population: and then look around to see whether the positive evil it inflicts on these important interests is counterbalanced by any commensurate advantages to the West Indians, or to any other class of society.

That the only advantageous mode of conducting a profitable commerce between two countries is by facilitating the cheapest exchange of their respective productions, is a position few will now venture to combat.

The tonnage employed in 1821, in the trade from India to the United Kingdom, amounted to about 79,000 tons; one-third of that tonnage must be dead weight, that is, heavy bulky articles. Of the productions of India, rice, saltpetre, and sugar, are known to be the three articles used for that purpose. Of rice, in 1821, about 4500 tons were imported; it sold at ruinous prices; and the import thereof must cease in the present state of abundant supply of all agricultural produce, and with the duty of 5*s.* per cwt. (*absolutely more than its prime cost*) to which it is subjected for the protection of domestic agriculture. Of saltpetre, the importations were 9000 tons; and the consumption must necessarily be limited, during a period of general peace. Of the remaining article, sugar, about 13,000 tons were imported. White Benares sugar, in Bengal, might have been purchased in May, 1822, for S^{a.} R^{s.} 8. 8. per Bazaar Maund, which, at the then exchange of 2*s.* 1*d.* per S^{a.} R^{e.} (the Company's present rate of remittance), brings the prime

	£	s.	d.
cost to.... . ...per cwt.	£1	4	2
Add charges at Calcutta, 8 per cent.	0	1	11
	1	6	1
Add freight, £6 per ton....	0	6	0
Ditto insurance, 4 per cent.	0	1	0
Ditto waste and average damp on prime cost, say 8 per cent.............	0	1	11
Cost in London	£1	15	0
Say, sells at 35*s.* per cwt. less charges 8 per cent.	1	12	2
Loss to the importer	£0	2	10

But supposing the duty of 10*s.* to be taken off, then the buyer could afford to give 10*s.* per cwt. more, thereby bringing up the price of East-India to that of the same quality of West-India sugar; this would leave a profit to the importer of 7*s.* 2*d.* per cwt. and capital would immediately *flow* into the sugar import business: the consequence would be, a reduction of the 7*s.* 2*d.* in the general price of sugar, to the advantage of the consumer.

From this statement we also see how the Indian merchant would benefit by saving the 2*s*. 10*d*. loss on import, under present circumstances.

The above calculation is taken from the actual prices and rates in May, 1822; and, considering the average out-turn of the shipments of sugar from India, 35*s*. per cwt. with 8 per cent. waste, is a high price.

If the 15*s*. duty is levied on this sugar, its introduction will be prohibited.

Actual out-turn of a parcel of sugar, imported in October, 1820, per William Money.

Invoice of 1154 bags, Benares Sugar, weighg Br. Mds. 2941, cost Sa. Rs. 32,856, at 2*s*. 4½*d*.				£3,901 13
Nett weight—less 6 per cent. for deficiency on voyage, cwt. 2073 at 35*s*. 6*d*. per cwt.		£3679 11 6		
Freight	539 4 0			
Charges in London	220 15 6			
		759 19 6		
Nett proceeds				2,919 12
			* Loss £	982 1

* See in Appendix—Statement of prime costs of East-India sugar from 3 to 10 Rs. per Maund.

But which, if not subject to the 10*s*. *duty*, would have made a saving remittance even at the Exchange of 2*s*. 4½*d*. I have taken my illustration from the finer qualities of Bengal sugars; but in proportion to the inferiority of the sugars imported, the heavier is the loss sustained, and the 10*s*. per cwt. additional duty is prohibitory to the import of the strong brown coarser qualities, selling, with reference to the supposed price of the finer sorts, at 18*s*. à 25*s*. per cwt.

It has been alleged that, in spite of these losses, the consumption of India sugar has increased. It is true, and although the observation gives rise to an important remark,—that low price effectually forces consumption, the fact itself does not affect our argument: we contend, and we are borne out by the concurrent testimony of all engaged in the trade, that the loss on Indian sugars has been so great, as to preclude the possibility of the continuance of its import. But in the fluctuating state of the law, as to duty, during the agitation of the question, and in a new trade, into which a host

of shipping has adventured, it requires some time to induce parties to return in ballast, when money is as plentiful as it has recently been in India to purchase produce; and it requires many a hard lesson to check the confidence of the merchant, and to damp his sanguine hopes of good fortune, and he continues to speculate in sugar rather than return empty; but to this there must be a limit. If this reasoning be, as I trust it is, grounded on fact, and on undeniable data, then, in what a situation does this exclusion of India sugar place the Indian trade to Great Britain? Does it not cripple, in every way, the means of carrying on that trade? altogether prevent the development of the great resources of our Indian Empire by British capital, skill, and industry, and in part tend to drive the raw materials of our manufactures, cotton, silk, indigo, drugs, to the Continent, where a better market can be found for the dead weight sugar?

I contend, that it paralizes a growing trade, a trade, the eventual extent of which, considering its increase since the opening in 1813, can

scarcely be calculated. Again, is it not undeniable that the power of our machinery has enabled us successfully to export British manufactures to the East Indies,* to spread them through the Persian Gulph and the Eastern Archipelago,—and what will stop our progress? Is it limited demand? No; the population to be clothed is immense. Is it the want of fertility in their soil to give returns? No; read the account of the productions of Java, Bengal, and Siam;†—it can only be retarded by restrictive laws and the protecting system. We refuse to benefit ourselves by the exuberant

Woollens exported to the East,

5th January, 1815	... £1,084.434		
1822	1,421,649		
Increase of	£ 337.215	30 per cent.	
Cotton goods from ...	£ 109,486		
to	£1,120,235		

† See Crawfurd's Eastern Archipelago; Colebrooke's Husbandry of Bengal; Milburn's Oriental Commerce; Roxburgh's Essay in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1802.

bounty of nature; we no longer act up to the motives that probably induced the legislature in former times to encourage the plantations of the West Indies; and although India possesses a rich soil, admirably adapted to the cane, watered by noble rivers, and teeming with a numerous population, we exclude its staple production, under the absurd apprehension that sugar would become too cheap.

Great Britain possesses skill, capital, machinery, and metals; we are advanced beyond all other nations in our manufacturing skill; we abound in things coveted by others; but we check the natural interchange that would take place, by refusing to receive the natural equivalents for our manufactures; forgetting, that where we will not *buy* we cannot *sell*.

Are not duties on articles brought as returns for our manufactures as injurious as duties on export? A manufacturer ships to India; he sells at a handsome profit upon his invoice, but his rupee, in which he receives his return, has fallen, from the difficulty of investing it advantageously in produce, from 2*s*. 6*d*. à 2*s*. 1*d*.—

16 à 20 per cent. It is by their cheapness alone that we have introduced our manufactures; and if, therefore, by narrowing the channels through which returns are to be received, we oblige the seller to increase his sale-price, are we not artificially destroying the natural cheapness of our manufactures, and impeding our own career in their diffusion throughout the East?

Thus the trade suffers in all its branches, export and import; and the savings of the Company's servants in India, civil and military, (who, by rigid economy alone, can now expect to return to their native country,) partake of the same depreciated value of money. The investment of money in sugar, the great staple of India, is checked, when, from the abundance of capital, new channels for its employment should be opened. The general trade is impeded, when the limited demand for remittances under the old monopoly is swelled by that of the free traders, requiring returns for their British manufactures; and, to crown the whole, though well aware that on the value of India

produce in the home-market the rate of exchange and the value of the rupee, compared with the British sterling, must ultimately depend, we artificially reduce that value by exorbitant duties to protect others. Is this a sound policy? Follow out the consequences to India, England, and those interested in the two countries, and see what an extensive mischief ensues, and how the evil arising from the restriction on sugar, trifling in former times, is increased by the altered circumstances of India.

The East India Company has to provide for considerable expenses at home; viz. the interest of the debt payable in England, the dividends on the stock and bonds, and certain civil and military charges. Having, thus, a constant necessity for draining India, is it not our obvious policy, as it is our unquestionable duty, to give every encouragement to the productions of India? How else can she satisfy these political demands?—And is not the burthen of her tribute aggravated by the restriction imposed upon her sugars.—The remittance for the Company's political charges,—the private

merchant's returns for his British goods,—all depend on the result of the sale of Indian produce at home. If produce will not pay, the remittance must be made in specie,—and this will reduce the money-value of Indian produce to the cultivator, whose rent and tax are money payments, thereby enhancing his real burdens, and grinding him to the earth, to the impoverishment of India and the deterioration of the Company's revenue. Within the last two years we have actually seen a considerable amount of *treasure* remitted from India. And to add to our injustice, we tax nearly 70 per cent. the fabrics of India, when imported into this country; and we insist upon the importation of British goods into India, at the low duty of 2½ per cent. and even in the recently proposed intercolonial trade between the East and West Indies, it was intended to exclude India manufactures by heavy duties. We discourage the manufacturing industry of our East-Indian subjects, and prevent their repaying themselves by profitably pursuing their agricultural industry. We deny them the pri

vileges of colonies, and they cannot exercise the rights of independent states. Why did Parliament recently refuse to protect the landed interest against Russian tallow or Dutch butter? Was it not the fear of finding an equal measure of taxation dealt out to us on British articles? and is then our conduct *just* towards dependent India? The restriction is therefore injurious to the trade and unjust to India. Here is positive evil enough to throw into the scale. But let us look forward: either the supply from India will be large or small. If small, are we not sacrificing the India trade to the imaginary *fears* of the West-India planters? If the difference of cost price be inconsiderable, we shall not have an import much beyond the present, say 13,000 tons, scarcely 7 per cent. on the gross import from the West Indies,—an important advantage to the East-India merchant, but no heavy sacrifice on the part of the West-India planter. But if the import be large, what an injury are we inflicting upon the natives of India and upon the British consumer? The 10s. added to his

present return will enable the British merchant to import sugar into Great Britain. If his profit be excessive on his prime cost, the influx of capital will soon bring his gains down to the proper level, and, by creating an enlarged demand for sugars in India, stimulate the native cultivator. Here then we perceive the extreme injury to the native of India; but follow out the consequences. The increased supply from India must be cheaper than that from the West Indies, or it would not exist; the cheaper growth will be substituted for the dearer, and thus add to the enjoyments of every family in the kingdom. If the market be brought down to one-half of the extent of the 10*s.* is not that a saving of nearly a million on the annual consumption of above three millions of cwt. besides the difference to the revenue in the saving upon the excess of drawback beyond the duty, which is now given as a bonus to the West-India planter to the extent of from 4*s.* to 5*s.* per cwt.? For, as this drawback enables the refiner to give so much more for his article, and there can be but

one price in a market, it actually enhances, *pro tanto*, the market-price of the whole quantity consumed.

Such would be the improved state of things if the duties were equalized; but reverse the picture, and see the obvious consequences to which the West Indians are leading the public. At present, they export one-fifth to one-third of their importation; and it is this surplus, above the wants of the home-consumers, that preserves the price of the article level with that on the Continent, for it is the price of the surplus that governs that of the whole.* The endeavour of the West Indians is to get rid of this surplus with as little sacrifice to themselves as possible, and this object is visible in all their proceedings. They may now carry sugars direct to the Continent, and there meet East-In-

* I have stated this broadly, not to encumber the argument, but the advantage given by the bounty alluded to above, certainly keeps the *home* price of British West-India sugar higher than that of foreign sugar *abroad;* the truth is, the home price moves in a certain proportion to the continental price, the bounty regulating the proportion.

dia sugars, without the burden of the transit through this country, as heretofore.

Once bring the supply down to the consumption, and exclude other growths, sugar may be high here and low abroad, and the West-India planters may then obtain their high remunerative price. But will not this be to the sacrifice of the consumer and the refiner?

It is thus--" Released from the obligation of
" bringing all his sugar to England, the West-
" Indian may, if he please, get rid of the whole
" of the surplus quantity in an American or
" Foreign European market; and, provided he
" can still keep in his hands the monopoly of
" the supply of this country, it will be in his
" power to exact, from the consumer and refiner
" here, an ample compensating price upon the
" remainder. To the permanent success of this
" plan, however, two obstacles, which may
" fairly be considered insurmountable, exist:
" viz. the tyrannical nature of its operation on
" the public, and the magnitude of the surplus
" to be thus artificially got rid of at a reduced
" price.

" Some temporary success might, neverthe-
" less, attend such a scheme destructive to
" others, and hardly less baneful in the end to
" himself. The diversion even of a small
" quantity of sugar, in the present state of the
" British market, would create a sensible scar-
" city; the demand of the last year having
" exceeded the supply, 8000 casks, owing, no
" doubt, to the purchases of the refiners for
" the purposes of exportation. An advance
" in price would, therefore, certainly follow in
" the first instance, and the refiners, thus forced
" either to abandon their houses and occupa-
" tions, or give an undue price for their raw
" material, would, probably, yield for a time to
" the demand of an increased price, influenced
" by a vague and certainly delusive expectation
" of a corresponding advance in the prices of
" their refined exportable produce. This state
" of things, however, could not long be sup-
" ported. The operation of such sales and
" purchases, a few times repeated, would
" transfer into the pockets of the planters, the
" larger part of the capital of the refiners, who,

" seeing themselves menaced by speedy and
" inevitable ruin, would, undoubtedly, with-
" draw from the struggle, and many would carry
" to foreign countries their skill and the remains
" of their capital, leaving the planter exposed
" to the consequences of a tremendous re-
" action, with an unmanageable surplus still on
" his hands, and more embarrassed than ever.

" Such, in all probability, would be the effect
" of so partial and unjust a measure, which
" would aggravate in the case of the refiner the
" injurious effects of the present monopoly,
" while it emancipated the planter from all
" those restrictions to which, in the spirit of
" fair reciprocity, he has hitherto ever been
" subjected.

" Against a really free trade, however, the
" refiners will never offer an objection. They
" will readily consent, that the West Indians
" shall buy and sell where they please, provided
" the same indulgence be granted to them-
" selves. They desire no protecting or prohi-
" bitory duties of any sort, content to rely
" entirely upon their ability to manufacture as

"well and as cheap as the refiners of other "countries. A free trade is all they desire; "but against a free trade partially granted "they protest, as against the worst and most "oppressive species of monopoly."*

The above is the account given by the refiners themselves; here they roundly assert that the quantity of their raw material is insufficient; they show that their interests, and those of the West-India planters, run directly opposite; *they* are anxious for an excess of supply in the home-market beyond home-consumption; the West-India planters are desirous, by every means, of equalizing the home-supply to the home-consumption; what is then the prayer of the refiner to the legislature? give us a free trade, let us buy sugar where we can get it cheapest, and we pledge ourselves with our skill, capital, and machinery, successfully to compete with all the world; deny us this and we sink under our foreign rivals.

* Extracted from the Report of the present State of Sugar Refineries in England, dated April, 1822.

Nothing can be more satisfactory than this declaration of the refiners; it shows a confidence, that their own resources are independent of the artificial restriction of the law, and affords a hope, that hereafter they may be willing to have all restraints removed, and to allow the fullest competition in refined sugar, both with the East and West Indies. But, if the times are not ripe for an entire free trade, and if the present system of our legislature will not allow foreign sugars to enter into competition with British sugars, let us give, with this reservation, full scope to the principle, and admit all sugars from British dependencies on an equal footing; nothing else can save the refiners. The folly of the restrictive system is most admirably exposed by Mr. Marryat, in his elaborate speech, in 1809, in favour of the admission of Martinique sugars; the doctrines are sound; the conclusion irresistible. We quote his words with pleasure.*

* Mr. Marryat's speech, 1809, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiv. page 79.—" It is granted, that when charters were first given to encourage the settlement

Can any one doubt, after this examination, that, unless the West Indians can show a very strong case, there are sufficient grounds, on the score of positive evil, to the

Native of India,
British Merchant,
Ship-owner,
Manufacturer,
Refiner,

of the British Islands, and during the infancy of their establishment, it was an expedient and necessary encouragement to secure to them the exclusive supply of the British market, by imposing such duties on foreign sugars as should amount to a prohibition. But now, that their produce is more than adequate to the consumption of the mother-country, so that one-third part of it must be re-exported, and the price it will fetch in foreign markets must necessarily regulate the price of what is sold here, it is evident that this restriction can no longer be of use to them; that not Great Britain alone, but Europe is the market for sugars the British planter has to look up to, and that the demand from abroad must increase in proportion to the increased quantity that diverted from their markets, finds its way to ours, so as to keep up the universal price at one common level." See also page 83.

and last, not least, to the Revenue and People of Great Britain, to justify the equalization of the duties?

Let us now hear what can be alleged by the West Indians.—There are two points on which their advocates have recently relied, with much pertinacity. 1st. The sacrifice of capital, which would be occasioned by a reduction in the cultivation and manufacture of sugar: and, 2d. The state of the slave-population, which they contend would be deteriorated by such a measure.

All investments of capital are intended for profit, but subject to the risk of loss. If a monopoly, sanctioned by the legislature, is claimed by the West Indians, let them prove their title; we deny its existence.

Assuming none to exist, wherein do the West Indians differ from all other sufferers, whose capital has been lost, and whose hopes have been disappointed by the introduction of new and shorter processes in the march of human improvement?

The admission of East-India competition

becomes a particular sacrifice for a general good. That a cheap supply of sugar is a most desirable object; that the consequent introduction of so great a comfort, into the domestic consumption of a larger mass of our people than at present enjoy it, is equally important, few can question; even if these benefits must be purchased by the reduction of the profits on West-India property; or even, in some instances, the total loss of West-India rent. If compensation be fairly due, let it be paid by the whole people, not taken exclusively from the East Indies.*

* On the subject of loss of capital, I cannot refrain from quoting the following admirable passage from the well-known pamphlet of Mr. Ricardo, on a subject strikingly analogous, "Protection to Corn," page 60. "That some capital would be lost cannot be disputed; "but is the possession or preservation of capital the end "or the means? The *means*, undoubtedly. What we "want is an abundance of commodities, and, if it could "be proved, that by the sacrifice of part of our capital "we should augment the annual produce of those objects "which contribute to our enjoyment and happiness, we

Such was the reasoning in the case of the introduction of new machinery, the formation of roads, docks, canals, in short, in all the great improvements which have so peculiarly marked the last forty years, and elevated this country to so remarkable a pre-eminence.

I would not have it here supposed that I think lightly of the situation of the West Indians, but I contend that their sufferings are partly to be attributed to themselves and to their system, and partly to circumstances altogether unconnected with East-Indian competition—that, whether East-India sugars be admitted or not, a great portion of these sufferings must be borne, and that the plan proposed by the West Indians of artificial support, will prove a most insuffecient remedy, independently of its injustice to India and its oppressive operation on Great Britain. These sufferings may be traced—

1stly, To the West-India system—non-resi-

" ought not, I should think, to repine at the loss of part
" of our capital."

dence—mortgages—forced cultivation to satisfy creditors on an inferior worn out soil—slavery—altogether raising the cost of production above its level in other sugar countries.

2dly, To the annual increase of the produce of Demerara and Berbice, and generally of all the British colonies.

3dly, To the result of these causes, viz.: excess of quantity at high cost prices, for which the home-consumers cannot pay, and the foreign consumers, having the command of cheaper sugars, will not pay; and,

4thly, To this surplus being thrown upon the home-market at prices ruinous to the West Indians.

Now, in my opinion, this result is partly the fault of the West Indians, and partly the consequence of a change of circumstances, which does not confer on the West Indian any claim to national compensation. But the West Indians are supposed to say that the abolition of the slave-trade has given their foreign rivals an advantage over them, and that, being the victims of the bad faith of others, they are

entitled to the consideration of Parliament and the country, and should be allowed, in addition to the monopoly of the home-market, such an additional bounty on the export of refined sugar as will enable them to meet their rivals abroad.*

Let us examine this proposition.

The Brazils, Cuba, and the Dutch and Spanish colonies, undersell the British West Indies in the foreign markets. The former are worked by fresh slaves: but do the West Indians then complain of a want of population? So far from this being the case, it was proposed by Mr. Robley to give up the employment of hired labourers, and to confine the cultivation of sugar within the limits of the powers of the slaves belonging to each estate. Surely it is allowed on all sides that to breed is cheaper than to buy. If the West Indians could purchase new slaves, they could find no employment for them, but by extending cultivation on the fresh lands of Demerara; or, by

* See "East and West India Sugar."

forcing the production of sugar, at high cost, from the inferior or worn-out soils of the old colonies, and, undoubtedly, the old British West Indies would not reap any advantage from either of these measures. If Hayti, from superiority of soil, yields twofold more than Jamaica; and Cuba and the Brazils, from their greater extent, afford more new rich land for the cultivation of sugar, can we be at a loss to discover the true cause of their success, in the competition with the British West Indies? It consists in the superiority of the soil they cultivate, not of the instruments by which they raise sugars. And had the Slave-Trade never been abolished, would the situation of the British West Indians have been improved? They might have bought fresh slaves, but they could not change their old soils for fresh land: and supposing Guiana open to the speculations of the slave-dealers and planters, in a very few years not an estate in the old colonies, except of the very finest quality of soil, would be worth cultivating in sugar. Far from attributing the ruin of the West Indians to the abolition, I should rather

consider that they essentially benefited by that measure. The Slave-Trade has been stigmatized; and in most countries *that* is become a clandestine trade which was previously open, and supported, and encouraged; consequently, the supercession of the West-India sugars in the foreign markets has been more gradual than it otherwise would have been. But, say the West Indians, we are the victims of the bad faith of other countries, who promised to abolish the Slave-Trade, and have not done so. That may partially be true. But can the British parliament or nation control other countries? will the increase of the bounty be the means of putting down the foreign Slave-Trade? and have the West Indians a right to claim a national compensation—to demand from the British public another direct tax, in the shape of an additional bounty; and, moreover, to oblige the British nation not only to pay higher for their own sugars than other nations, but absolutely to pay part of the cost price of the sugars consumed by foreigners; and, when the object to be gained by these sacrifices is clearly contrary

to sound commercial policy, to the interests of our manufacturers and merchants, and a violation of the just rights of other British dependencies? And, under such an artificial system, can any rational man look for success in the race of competition abroad? To put down the foreign Slave-Trade, there is a much more obvious course to pursue, viz. to encourage East-India sugar. But, rejoin the West Indians, the sugars from the foreign slave countries, Brazil and Cuba, beat the East-India sugars also out of the foreign markets.*

Now, to this I answer, give the East Indians time, and what reason has shown to be true in theory will be found true in this instance, as in former ones, in practice. Considering the state of India and of foreign Europe,—the period that has elapsed since the general peace, —the intimate connexion subsisting between Great Britain and British India, can we be surprised at the trade having been hitherto chiefly directed to Great Britain? Already one moiety

* See "East and West India Sugar."

of the import from India goes abroad, 6500 tons out of 13,000 tons, loaded with expenses of transit. And we know that, in 1791, a considerable direct trade in sugar was carried on between Calcutta and the ports in Flanders. (See Resolutions of the General Court of East-India Proprietors, March, 1792; and Milburn's Oriental Commerce, vol. ii. p. 271.) And again, once throw open the home market to East-India sugar, and a stimulus would be given to production, capital would be invested in sugar; and as the cultivation of sugar is expensive, and advances to the Ryots are at an exorbitant interest, this influx of capital would materially lower the cost of production in India, increase of supply would follow, and cheapness be the result. At least this is the natural course to pursue,—these are the natural results to expect. But, if we should be disappointed, and slave sugar beat free sugar abroad, is that any reason why Great Britain should pay an exorbitant price at home, or be burdened with another direct tax to promote the export of West-India sugars to the continent? And if,

after trying all we can to drive the India trade to foreign countries, we cannot succeed in this wise scheme, and India sugars are beaten out of the foreign markets, are we to continue to close the home-market also, and deprive our Indian possessions of the only vent that will then be left for the most important production of their soil? Can any proposal be more absurd? If this bounty scheme and monopoly scheme be abandoned, the West Indians have nothing left but to reduce their *quantity;* and that reduction will be a positive sacrifice of the capital embarked on the inferior soils. And, after the sacrifice shall be completed, the consequences will be—higher prices and a narrowed consumption; whereas, if the same sacrifice followed the admission of East-India sugars, the partial evil would be compensated by a general benefit, the lowest possible remunerative price would be forced on the East and West Indians by competition, and a larger supply brought to the consumers, and an extensive good conferred on the British manufacturer and East-Indian agriculturist. And supposing the

equalization of duty to produce an annual increased consumption of East-India sugars in preference to West-India sugars, the loss of capital in buildings and sugar-works, and in the arrangements of the manufacture in the West Indies, must still be gradual, and may be made more so, by allowing a certain time to elapse before the whole of the protecting duty be repealed. To this, no friend to the cause of the East Indies can reasonably object; the immediate recognition of the principle, that sugars from all British dependencies should be admitted equally, is the important point to gain.

The land in the West Indies would remain, production of other articles would follow, and, instead of buying abroad provisions at a high rate, the planters would find it to their interest to devote a portion of that land to their production at home; thereby lessening the cost of the cultivation on the finer soils.

At present, from the temptation held out by the monopoly of the home-market, the planter unnaturally extends his cultivation, and sacri-

fices every other growth to increase his sugar. The evil of this system has been ably pointed out by one of their own body, Mr. Robley.*

Such have been the fluctuations in West-India produce from this evil, the inseparable evil of monopoly, that no property has been so proverbially unsafe as West India property. It is notorious that nine estates† out of ten have changed hands within these few years. Are the merchants, who have benefited by these fluctuations, or the capitalists, who hold mortgages, to claim more than even the landed gentry of England can obtain, in an analogous case? Who proposes to exclude the produce of Ireland from the home-market of England? Would not such an attempt be universally reprobated? The East Indians are called upon

* See pamphlet, published by Richardson, in 1808, entitled, "A Permanent and effectual Remedy suggested "for the Evils, under which the British West Indies now "Labour;" in which the plan for reducing the surplus is boldly laid down, and a partial change of the cultivation of the land from sugar to provisions recommended.

† Jamaica.

to give up their rights as British subjects, to preserve the capitals of speculators in the newly-opened alluvial land of Demerara, and of mortgagees of West-India estates. If we examine the system generated by this monopoly, we can easily see how difficult it is to obtain a remunerative price for West-India produce. The mortgagee in England insists upon a certain consignment of sugar; the commission on which is to increase the interest on his loan. Sugar must be grown, therefore, on inferior soils; the supplies for the negroes must come through the London mortgagee, and the commission and charges still further swell the cost; then the freight must be procured for the ships of the London mortgagee; and here we discover the secret of the extraordinary fact, that the West-India freights have not been reduced in an equal ratio with those from India.

The West-India merchant must benefit as ship-owner, and the charge be thrown on the sugar, and paid for in the remunerative price demanded of the home-consumer, in the mo-

nopoly of the home-market; and such has been the obliquity of the reasoning assumed by our opponents, that this want of assimilation between East and West India freight was an argument used by the West Indians, in 1821, to justify a still further addition to their protecting duty.

But the chief capital embarked in the West Indies is in the negroes. Cannot their labour be turned to some account, even if the cultivation of sugar, on inferior soil, were to cease?

As to their comfort and subsistence, which it has been asserted forms the second ground on which the West Indians rest their claim to the preference of the home-market, is it not certain, that the negroes, on those estates where a portion of the land is dedicated to growing provisions, are the most at ease, whilst on those bound to produce a quantity of sugar sufficient to pay the London mortgagee, and where provisions are bought, the fare of the negroes is the scantiest, and their labour the most severe? The slave-trade is now abolished.

the gradual elevation of the slaves from their present condition to that of peasantry can never be accomplished, desirable to humanity as it is, if the West Indies are to be cultivated as a garden. Besides, what can be more distressing to the slaves than the alternations of prosperity and ruin, to which property depending on a monopoly is always liable. The money-value of the slave to the London mortgagee, his capital in human beings, may be lessened by the curtailment of the growth of sugar in the West Indies; but the capital of the state, the man himself, will still remain, and become more valuable to the state and to society, as he gradually loses the character of the slave in that of the peasant, and when his *labour* and not his *person* bears a price, and when there is no demand of a remunerative price to pay for the prime cost of the man. But it has been asserted, that encouraging sugar in the East Indies is only employing slaves in the East Indies, instead of the slaves in the West. Now, to this, I give an unqualified negative.—A system of slavery similar to West-India slavery does

not exist in Bengal, or in those provinces in which sugar is cultivated for export.* It is true, that in the different stages of society exhibited in the immense extent of Hindostan, a state of personal slavery is found to exist in some districts; but it is to a very small extent, confined to a very small population; and the whole stream of the policy and principles of the East-India Company is adverse to systematic slavery;† and when proper inquiries are made, and the true state of the case accurately known, I entertain no doubt but that it will be found the Court of Directors has lent its aid to put an end to the evil, small as it is, and that the Indian Government will prepare such measures as may cure this disease in society, without injury to the slaves themselves.

It has been asserted, the West Indies are a great mart for our manufactures, and add to the strength of the empire, by the encouragement of British shipping. Now the export decla-

* See further explanation in the continuation of this work, p. 190, in reply to Mr. Marryat.

† See Appendix (2).

red value of the British manufactures and produce, in 1820-21, to China and India, was £3,713,021, that to the West Indies, £3,831,300, and in 1821-22 as follows:

Exports to India and China . . £4,087,020
British West Indies 3,985,053*

The latter includes the circuitous supply of South America, which must cease when a direct intercourse takes place with those countries, through Vera Cruz and the Carraccas.

I have before stated the increase of the export of cotton and woollens to British India. The report of the Lords and Commons on foreign trade are full of proofs of the probable extension of the demand for British manufactures in British India and in Java, the Eastern Archipelago, &c. In short, it is now well-known, that the demand is limited, not as heretofore imagined, by the absence of the want itself, but by the inability to gratify it, from the difficulty in obtaining equivalents wherewith to purchase.

* See Documents in Appendix (8).

The alleged insurmountable barrier, opposed by the prejudices of the Hindoos, to the progress of trade, is now known to be illusory. Contrast then the wants of eighty millions in India, with one million in the West Indies, and the nature of the two societies: in India an opulent priesthood, merchants, nobles, princes, sovereigns; in the West Indies 700,000 slaves, and 20,000 agents, planters, and clerks. The wants of India offer so unbounded a field for the exertion of British skill in manufactures, as at once to place at an immeasurable distance the comparative value of the commerce of the East over that of the West Indies. As to shipping, here even the advocates of the old system, the men opposed to theory and free trade, must confess that British shipping has a wider range in the East than in the West Indies.

In bringing sugar from the East Indies the voyage is double the length of that from the West Indies, and British shipping has absolutely superseded the native shipping of India by its cheapness.

The free trade is wholly carried on with India and British registered ships, manned with British sailors, in the full proportion required in all other trades.* Lower the price of sugar, you enlarge its consumption; an increased supply requires additional shipping. See how deeply the British ship-owners are interested in this question; and if the naval strength of Great Britain depends on the extent of its commercial navy, may we not calculate on the warm support of all those who wish to strengthen this right arm of the security of Great Britain. Contrast the East and West Indies as to the advantages derived from each by Great Britain. The patronage of the West Indies increases the power of the crown,—that of the East Indies is exercised by an independent body of men, and diffused over the whole so-

* Under the provisions of the India Register Act, which expressly declares Lascars or Native India sailors not to be deemed British sailors.—Act 55 George III. cap. 116.

ciety. Not a single colony in the West Indies supports itself. From India, every year brings home civil and military servants, or the successful commercial adventurer, to add to the productive powers of the parent state, by the employment of his capital. If the revenue derived from the West-India sugar be large, it would be increased rather than diminished by the introduction of East-India sugar at lower prices, and the consequent increase of consumption; and as to the revenue derived from the protecting duty, Government have always most solemnly declared, that it was never intended as a source of national income, but solely and entirely as a protection to the West Indies.

Some persons affect to see nothing but insecurity in the tenure by which India is held; but can they seriously hold this opinion, and yet entertain no fear for the West Indies, in the vicinity of Hayti, and the Independent Republics of North and South America? The tenure by which India is held, is the state of society

of the natives, and the superiority of the British Government to that of their former rulers. The slave-population of the West Indies is a source of insecurity inherent to those dependencies: and, if we lose the supremacy of India, will the cultivation of cheap sugar necessarily be destroyed? Did we lose the cheap productions of the United States when we lost those colonies? or did they cease to buy our manufactures, when they ceased to be our *fellow subjects*?

To conclude, I trust I have shown that the protecting duty is vicious in principle, and injurious in practice, that it affects alike the prosperity of the East-India trade,

the Natives of India,
the British Merchant,
the British Ship-Owner,
the British Manufacturer, and
Refiner,

and of the whole community as consumers. That the maintenance of the protecting duty cannot be justified, either by the supposed prescriptive rights of the West Indians, under the

alleged faith of the legislature, or by the terms of the colonial system.

That the pleas advanced by its advocates of a sacrifice of capital and injury to the slaves, by an equalization of the duty, are most inadequate grounds for its continuance.

That, if the comparative advantages of the East and West Indies are invidiously brought into contrast, the balance preponderates in favour of the former, the natural development of the resources of India, offering the widest field for British manufactures and British shipping, whilst, unlike the West Indies, instead of consuming, she increases the resources of the parent state. That both are British dependencies, and possess equal rights,*

* The following were the words of an eminent West-India merchant, (Mr. Marryat,) in 1809, in the House of Commons, even with regard to the French conquered colony of Martinique. What must they be, if applied to India.

"But, I would ask, are men influenced by pecuniary considerations alone? Have they no feelings of any other description? Even in the most trifling cases, no man is satisfied to be put on a worse footing than his neighbour.

and that Great Britain is bound, by every tie, to protect the rights of her subjects in India, —to foster and encourage their agricultural and commercial prosperity,—and to obtain for them, not an advantage over another, but even-

If he does not feel a distinction made to his disadvantage as an injury, he considers it as an insult, and resents it still more strongly. Can it be expected that the inhabitants of Martinique will contentedly endure that, while the produce of every other West-India colony, conquered by Great Britain during the present war, is admitted to her home-consumption, their produce alone should be excluded? Will they not ask what they have done, that, like Cain, they should be branded with a mark of opprobrium, and treated as a stigmatized race? But, unfortunately, for the effect this measure may be expected to produce upon their minds, it so happened, that when the island was captured, that temporary difference between the price of sugar for home-consumption and exportation, to which I have already adverted, did exist; and, therefore, they will consider the distinction not as an imaginary, but as a real grievance. Besides, they will naturally be led to conclude, from the strenuous opposition made by the British planters to the admission of their sugars for home-consumption, that the object is worth contending for."—See Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. xiv. p. 88.

handed justice,—an open field for exertion, a right not of exclusion, but of competition; a power not to narrow the enjoyments and diminish the wealth of the parent state, but to enlarge the consumption of an almost necessary of life; and, at the same time, to increase the commerce and wealth of the country.

SINCE the foregoing observations were written, a pamphlet* proceeding directly from the West Indians has been published. We there get the substance of their claims; and as they rest their right to the *preference* on the *compact*, and on general *expediency*, the two heads so amply considered in the foregoing pages, I trust I may safely refer the reader to my remarks on these leading branches of their argument, without entering into a detailed reply.

Some particular points however, I shall now proceed to examine. What is the West Indian interpretation of the great Charter of the Colonies,—the National Compact? for which they have picked up the stray oratorical expression of Mr. Fox,—this "something—*more binding* than an Act of Parliament." It is this: that if the West Indians bring (not their whole produce) but a surplus beyond home-consumption, they have fulfilled their part of this compact Now, will they agree to give up this

* Observations on the Claims of the West Indians

compact when they cease to bring a surplus? I can venture to predict they will not. For all their efforts are directed to get rid of this surplus; and unless they do, they must sink.

The views of the legislature, in the colonial system, probably were, that *all* the produce of the colonies should be brought to the mother-country: 1st. to afford a cheap supply for home-consumption, it being then supposed the West Indies was the most natural place for the growth of sugar, and the slave-cultivation the cheapest method in a tropical climate; and, 2dly, to supply, from the surplus beyond home-consumption, a raw material for the home refiners, so that the mother-country, securing a cheaper price to herself first, should next furnish the rest of the world with the manufactured article. To this view, all the regulations of the sugar-trade were directed.

But in the revolution of circumstances, other sugars are brought to Europe cheaper than British West-India sugars; and foreign competition, either in the raw or refined article, is acknowledged to be nearly out of the question, (see

page 9). The consequence will be, that (notwithstanding the bounty-tax) the refiner cannot continue his trade with a dear raw material, and the West Indian, unable to bear the reduction in price which must follow, from the surplus being thrown upon the home-market, will curtail his quantity of produce, so as to bring the supply nearer upon a level with the average consumption. We are thus to lose our refineries in the first instance, and ultimately to be supplied by our friends in the West Indies at a higher rate, than that at which all the rest of the world obtain their sugars. This, I contend, is the consequence to which the preference given to the West Indians must inevitably lead; all their endeavours are directed to the reduction of this surplus, *then, and then only*, can they command the home market and remunerative prices. The alternative lies between narrowing production or producing at a loss: can we doubt which will be adopted? The vent for the surplus is closed by cheaper sugars. May we not here retort on the West Indian, if he denies that he wants to

reduce the surplus, Why, then, cavil at the East Indian for seeking the home-market; your surplus levels prices at home with those on the Continent; therefore, if you wonder why the East Indian does not go abroad with his sugar,* he may wonder why you do not allow him to bring his sugar into the home-market? For, by your own showing, there is, whilst any surplus exists, but one price;† and whether the excess be here or abroad cannot alter the case. But, say the West Indians, cheapness does not sufficiently increase consumption, for we see the surplus still remains on hand, there is therefore no room for the East-India sugar. Now, my answer is, that the facts, as stated by the West Indians themselves, are at variance with their reasoning. In eight years, from 1814 to 1822, they state the consumption of sugar has increased from 1,905,953 to 2,487,982 cwt. (see p. 20), an

* Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to form foreign connexions, but the Mauritius sugar is sent to all the continental markets open to it.

† The fact is, British West-India sugar is dearer than foreign sugars, owing to the export-bounty, say about 5s. per cwt. but this does not affect the argument. See p. 37.

increase of 30,000 tons on 90,000 tons, nearly one-third. Allow East-India sugars to be admitted on equal duties, and (when the surplus of the West Indies is reduced, as by our previous reasoning we contend it must) the competition of the two growths will so operate as to admit East-India sugars to the extent of its superior cheapness over the West-India sugar. If, out of the 10*s*. duty, the price can be so arranged as to give 5*s*. more to the importer, the remaining 5*s*. will fall to the consumer in a reduction *pro tanto* of price: assuming then the price of sugar at 35*s*. à 40*s*., here is an immediate admission of between one-eighth and one-seventh more sugar for the same amount of money employed in its purchase, or on 150,000 tons, nearly 20,000 tons, enough for the dead weight of the India trade. This argument proceeds on the supposition, that West-India sugars can keep their ground at 35*s*. à 40*s*. But, continue the West Indians, this will end in a substitution of East for West India sugar, and destroy all our hopes of obliging the home consumers to pay a remunerating price to their fellow-subjects in the old Britisl

West-India colonies.* If the West Indians cannot stand the competition, so it will, and so it ought. The original intentions of the framers of the supposed compact, or in other words of the Colonial System, cannot then be accomplished It will have fallen to pieces in the revolution of time. The West Indies will no longer yield to the mother country *cheap sugar* for home consumption, nor afford the raw material, which the British manufacturer can work up for profitable export. Nothing then can save the West Indians but getting rid of the surplus, and that surplus is the only check upon the high prices of a monopoly: and, I ask, whether the legislature and the country can tolerate this new version of the colonial compact? But the West Indians tell us, (in page 37,) "that the consumer will rue the day in which he shall have the choice given him of the two monopolies, and, choosing the cheapest, shall substitute East for West India

* If this peace price be, in proportion to that stated, in 1808, by Mr. Robley, 65*s.* 7*d.* per cwt. exclusive of duty, I leave the reader to decide upon the justice of this observation—without apprehension.

sugars." Why? "Because the export trader will gain nothing by a transfer, but rather the reverse, as the population of the West Indies depend wholly for their supply of manufactures on this country. The East only partially, as it is open to other sources of supply, and a large portion of the population are employed in manufactures, not only for their own consumption, but also for exportation."

As if, supposing the consumers of sugar to save one million per annum on its purchase, they would not have a larger disposable capital to invest in manufactures: as if, supposing the manufacturer got one-third or one-sixth more sugar for his piece of cloth from the East than from the West Indies, he would not be the richer for the trade with the former, rather than with the latter. It is not the mere sale or exchange of goods that proves the value of a trade; it is what the seller gets in return. Suppose the whole home supply of sugar to be purchased in India, it must be paid for by British labour, as much as if it came from the West Indies. But if the same quantity of Bri-

tish labour would purchase three pounds of sugar in the West Indies and four pounds in the East, can any reasonable man doubt which trade is most beneficial to British industry?—So much for the arguments of the trifling saving of one penny per pound; not less, however, than one-third of the prime cost of the finest quality of East-India sugar.

But the West Indians indulge in fearful anticipation of war, and the consequent deprivation of sugar, or its circuitous import through neutrals, &c. Now, my opinion on this head is, that it is most dangerous doctrine to propose to legislate, so as to provide, at the expense of our comfort in peace, for our comparative exemption from evil in war. To make wars less popular and, consequently, less frequent, they should bring in their train—high price, high freights, high insurance, difficulties of supply, and abundance of evil. Peace should be considered by every wise statesman, as the natural and regular course of things under which we wish to live, to which war is the exception; but here the West-Indian advo-

cate wishes to make war the rule, and peace the exception

But I deny the fact assumed by the West Indians, that our possessions in the West Indies offer a more secure supply of sugar. I too can paint, if we must indulge in visions of futurity the sugar consumer trembling during another American war. The superiority of the British naval force in the West Indies may be doubtful. The United States' fleet may menace our colonies without, and a discontented mutinous slave-population may be ready to rise within We have during the last war ample proof, that there is no blockade which the enterprize and ingenuity of self-interest cannot evade

The advocates for the admission of East India sugars at equal duties are accused (pages 29-30) of improperly assuming to be the advocates of 100 millions of people, for it is asked, can the sugar for the home market put more than 300,000 labourers in action? Here again let me refer the West Indians, as before, to one of their own body. Have men no feelings? are the East Indies to bear the brand

of Cam.' I substitute the East Indies for Martinique, and I rest this part of the case on the eloquent arguments of Mr. Marryat. The truth is, the admission of sugar is of immense importance to the agriculture and commerce of India, and, consequently, to the whole population of India. This I have attempted to explain, and I appeal to every practical merchant for the accuracy of my statement. The finer goods cannot be brought to Europe without heavy goods; deprive the East Indians of sugar and they must bring Ganges' sand with their indigo, cotton, silk, and drugs, to the home-market; or, what will more probably take place, they will carry that *sugar*, indigo, drugs, &c. to the Continent. This is the alternative. On the result of the present discussion hangs the rising prosperity of this new trade, which opens so wide a field for the natural interchange of the tropical productions of the East with the manufactured goods of this country.

In page 46, the West Indian goes back to the olden times of the Company, and observes that so little was competition expected from the

East Indies that, until late years, no provision was made for the allowance of bounty on sugars refined from East-India sugars. We agree with him that whilst the energies of India lay dormant, under the monopoly of the Company, no rivalry was anticipated; but the question now is—Shall this continue if the original object of obtaining a cheap supply of sugar from the West Indies can be accomplished better elsewhere? The term of the patent is expired:—the British West Indies must allow competition with other British dependencies at home, having yielded to cheaper growths abroad. No bolstering up will now avail,—no scale of duties formed upon average prices will avail. The question is whether the country will submit to lose its export for want of a cheap material, and allow the West Indians to reduce their supply to the present average of the home-consumption, and force, by their monopoly, a high remunerative price from the British consumer? And another question still remains—Shall we allow all this to be accomplished, to the prejudice of the resources of India, of the pros-

perity and feelings of an immense population placed under our charge, and to the extreme detriment of a branch of commerce which promises to prove of incalculable advantage to the British empire?

AT length a champion of the West Indies of undoubted prowess has appeared. A reply has been published to the arguments used by the advocates for competition between the East and West Indies, and a justification attempted of the Author's consistency in opposing, in 1823, those very principles which he supported, and so ably illustrated in reference to the inhabitants of Martinique in 1809. As his opponents have dealt largely in quotations from the published speech* of this Author (indeed one of them has given the whole speech in his Appendix), the world must decide upon his claim to consistency. We enjoy the benefits of his *former* arguments, and are satisfied. In making this remark, I am far from undervaluing the work before me. And as I consider that it contains nearly all that can be said for the claims of the West-Indians, I propose taking the several points in the order in which they stand in the pamphlet, and examining

* East and West India S[illegible]

briefly their merits and accuracy. And here let me offer one observation to this Author; namely, That those who propose new measures or innovations, as our Author would call them, are not always the greatest theorists. In fact, the old systems that he advocates sprung from the complicated theories of the men of former times, and partake of their prejudices, whilst the measures I venture to propose are grounded on conclusions deduced from general principles, discovered in a more advanced period of knowledge, and are plain and simple, and clear in themselves.

But of all idle theories, that is the most absurd which would keep the man in the leading-strings of the child—which requires us to adhere to the forms of ancient things—when the reality no longer exists—that adopts a part and relinquishes a part—leaving the remnant—a motley and incongruous heap of inconsistencies.

Thus the Author of the Reply would relax the colonial system in favour of the West-In-

dians, but allow them to preserve the monopoly of the home-supply. The system must be abandoned when the cord presses too tightly on the West Indies, but he cares little if the mother-country be bound hand and foot, and left at the mercy of the colonists.

The Author directs his replies,

1st. To the alleged advantages held out by the East Indians in an increased consumption of sugar from its increased cheapness.

2d. To the benefits offered to British manufacturers, by an extended sale of their goods in India

3d. To the supposed advantages to British shipping and seamen, by the increase of the trade to India.

4th. The East-India Company and their monopoly are severely scrutinized, and the right of the Company to interfere in the sugar question denied.

5th. The philanthropists are answered, and slavery declared to be as odious in the

East as in the West Indies; and farther, that all our sympathy should be reserved for the West-Indians.

6th. We have the respective rights of East and West Indies contrasted. Then follows an eulogium on the navigation laws and colonial system, and the existing restrictions on the West Indies are brought forward, and the recent relaxations commented upon; and, after an ingenious proposal to carry into complete effect the principles of free-trade, the whole is wound up with a long quotation from M. de Bourienne, who appears to advocate, in France, the continuance of the ancient colonial system; under which, it seems, the French West Indies are suffering equally with our own colonies.

The first point is the increase of consumption—which the advocates for East-India competition contend would follow cheapness of supply.

Now the Author of the Reply cannot mean

to contest the principle; all his arguments and all his jokes can only mean, that the probable amount of increase is over-stated. But he admits, that cheapness has produced a difference of 30,000 tons in the consumption since 1814, that is to say, that the consumption in

1814 was .... 121,005 tons, and in
1820 was .... 151,571 ,, ;

and I have elsewhere asserted, that I did not pretend to say what the result of competition might be, but in whatever degree superior cheapness of production in the East Indies existed, *to that extent* the country would and ought to benefit. If it be small, the import would be trifling, and the opposition of the West Indians is an absurd jealousy; if large, then how great the injustice to India and England. Now the *degree* was attempted to be measured by the Liverpool Association by an illustration drawn from coffee and cotton. The Author of the Reply is pleased to say, that if the consumption of coffee increased, it was accompanied by a reduction in tea, and dates the substitution of coffee for tea from

1807; but the following memorandum will show, with what *accuracy* the reply is drawn up, and how little the assertion is borne out by the fact:

	Tea delivered.	Exported.	Remainder.
viz. *1807	23,608,569	9,509	23,599,060
1808	23,961,332	73,299	23,888,033
1809	23,418,596	203,531	23,251,065
1810	24,042,143	69,576	23,972,567

Of all the articles that could have been brought forward, tea affords the most unfortunate illustration of our author's assertion, for the consumption of tea, like sugar, "*is limited by the capacity of the human stomach;*" † and it has increased as follows:

		lbs.
In 1785, the Company's sales were		15,081,737,
1786 to 1794,	averaged	16,964,957,
1821,	"	24,483,970,

although the duties have been raised, in the interim, to 100 per cent. *ad valorem.*‡

* See Appendix (6). † Reply, page 7.

‡ The relative consumption of sugar and tea is as 8 to 1, even in the lowest scale of expenditure. In the Liverpool workhouse, the allowance to a pauper is half a pound of sugar, or 8 oz. to 1 oz. of tea, for a week. There is little doubt of a very great increase of the consumption of both

Next comes cotton. Now the increase of cotton cannot be controverted; but it is said, "that although consumption in a manufacture may be indefinite, that the human stomach is finite."* Is then consumption in the manufacture the only result? Surely cotton goods are manufactured to be worn by human beings; and if, because sugar is to be eaten, the capacity of the stomach is to be the limit of consumption, surely the consumption of cotton goods is also limited by the numbers of the population? and, as to the rule of three about which the Author of the Reply is so facetious, in his quotation he forgot to insert a few words which completely take off the edge of his ridicule, and prove the Liverpool Committee not to be quite such madmen† as he would lead us to imagine. After stating the proposition

of these articles, if a more judicious system of taxation, and a less restricted commerce, would allow the capacity of the human stomach to be more the measure of consumption than it is at present.

* Reply, page 7.

† In Reply, page 9. "Really such extravagant propositions are more like the reveries of *madmen*, than the sober calculations of men of business."

quoted in page 9. The Committee proceed, "It does *not follow*, that arithmetical proportion would be observed."

The same inaccuracy of quotation marks the observations on the next head—"alleged cheapness" (page 11.) *That* was illustrated by an example, to show, that 2*s*. 10*d*. out of the 10*s*. per cwt. protecting duty would satisfy the East Indians, and 7*s*. 2*d*. would be left to the consumer. Now, unless the Author of the Reply means to deny, that competition will reduce profits to a level, and to assert, that capital will not flow into those trades that pay higher than others, my argument is untouched, and it is not hope alone that will be left to the consumer, but a *certainty* of a reduction in price as the inevitable consequence to proceed from an incontrovertible principle.

But, says the Author of the Reply, can sugar fall lower? It was 75*s*. 2*d*. per cwt. average price in 1814, and was 36*s*. 3*d*. in 1820, and 27*s*. 2¼*d*. in 1823.* Now I answer, it is well known that the West-India planter could not grow in war at a profit under 65*s*. Mr. Rob-

* Reply, page 10.

ley uses these words, page 22,* "of what use, "therefore, is it to the British planter to grow "sugar for a market which can only afford "him 32*s*. for an article for which he ought to "obtain 65*s*. 8*d*. if he is paid the cost of pro- "ducing and transporting it to the place of "sale, and expects any adequate return for "his labour and capital;" but it is not so well known, whether the East Indian cannot export with a profit at little more than one-half that cost price; he wants to try his capability both for his own sake and that of the public, and as the consequence of the inadequacy of the present price to the West Indian necessarily is, an endeavour on his part to raise the price nearer to the level of its cost, is not the argument established, that, ultimately, nothing but East-India competition can *insure cheapness* to the consumer, and, consequently, an *increased consumption*, to the incalculable benefit of the lower classes of the community and of the revenue?

The author next attempts to controvert the assertions of all the East-India advocates, that sugars are wanted as a return for British

* Permanent and Effectual Remedy.

manufactures. An old story about the 3000 tons annually provided for private trade in 1793, and never applied for, is brought out from the dust in which it had slept, in many an ingenious pamphlet, written to support the Company's monopoly. To this novel and ingenious observation I shall answer in the following words of the

Lords' report,—page 4,

Commons' report,—page 197,

and to the following answers extracted from the valuable evidence of Mr. Rickards and the late Mr. F. Mitchell, both of them men peculiarly fitted, from their talents, and commercial knowledge, and actual experience of India, to form a correct estimate of the probable extension of the free trade.

Lords' Report on the Trade with the East Indies and China,—Page 4.

"The Committee cannot dismiss this branch "of the subject without observing that, although "it is difficult, from the great fluctuation "which the free trade to the peninsula of "India has experienced since it has been ad-

" mitted upon the terms of the renewed Char-
" ter granted to the East-India Company in
" 1813, to estimate fairly the precise amount
" of its increase, it must be admitted that
" its progress has been such as to indicate that
" neither *a power to purchase nor a disposition*
" *to use commodities of European manufacture*
" *are wanting in the natives of British India;*
" whilst the minute knowledge of the wants
" and wishes of the inhabitants, acquired by a
" direct intercourse with this country, would
" naturally lead to a still further augmentation
" of our exports. The great increased con-
" sumption cannot be sufficiently accounted
" for by the demand of European residents,
" the number of whom does not materially
" vary, and it appears to have been much *the*
" *greatest in articles calculated for the general*
" *use of the natives.* That of *the cotton manu-*
" *factures* of this country alone is stated,
" since the first opening of the trade, to have
" been augmented *from four to five fold.* And
" the taste of the natives for such articles may
" not improbably have been created in some
" instances, and extended in others, by that

" very glut in the market, which has doubtless,
" by its excess and consequent lowering of
" prices, frequently defeated the speculations
" of private merchants.

" The value of the merchandize exported
" from Great Britain to India, which amount-
" ed in the year 1815 to £870,177, in the
" year 1819, increased to £3,052,741; and,
" although the market appears then to have
" been so far over-stocked as to occasion a
" diminution of nearly one half in the exports
" of the following year, 1820, *that diminution*
" *appears to have taken place more in the articles*
" *intended for the consumption of Europeans*
" *than of natives*, and the trade is now* stated,
" by the best informed persons, to be reviving.
" When the *amount of population* and the *ex-*
" *tent of country* over which the consumption of
" these articles is spread are considered, it is ob-
" vious that every facility which can consistently
" with the interests and security of the Com-
" pany's dominions be given to the private
" trader, should be afforded," &c.

* Report dated April, 1821.

Extract of the Third Report from the Select Committee, on the Foreign Trade of the Country.—Commons.—Page 197.

" Your Committee have thought it their " duty to inquire of various persons who have " engaged in the trade which has been open- " ed under the acts of 1813, 1814, and 1817, " to His Majesty's subjects, as well as of " some of the leading men in the direction or " service of the East-India Company, as to the " effect of the facilities given to the several " acts, and of the operation of the restrictions, " which are still preserved.

" It appears certain that the trade with " India, whether of import or export, has " materially increased since 1814, and that " the increase has been effected by the private " merchants, while the trade of the Company " has experienced a diminution. The House " will find it stated in some part of the evi- " dence, that the taste and demand for " British manufactures has been gradually " progressive since the opening of the trade, " and that those manufactures have found

" their way to parts of India and the neigh-
" bouring countries, which they had not been
" accustomed to reach."

Examination of Mr. R. Rickards.—Page 209.

" Are you of opinion that the trade on the
" whole has increased, or only that an increase
" has taken place in the private trade?—Our
" concerns and experience as agents lead us
" to the conclusion that the trade has, on the
" whole, very considerably increased.

" Can you at all state in what articles the
" increase has taken place, in the use of
" British manufactures? — An increase has
" taken place in British staples generally,
" and particularly in the woollen and cotton
" manufactures. I received only a few days
" ago late letters from Calcutta, in which a
" comparison is drawn between the imports
" of British cotton goods in 1813, I think,
" and the last year of account, 1819–20, from
" which it appears that the import of cotton
" goods into Calcutta in 1813–14, or before
" the opening of the trade, amounted to about
" 90,000 rupees, and that in the year ended

"30th April, 1820, the imports amounted to "upwards 2,600,000 rupees. The same let-"ters mention a large import of woollens "within the years, over and above the usual "supply by the East-India Company."

Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee on the Foreign Trade of the Country.
—Page 282.*—Mr. Forbes Mitchell.*

"Do you conceive that very beneficial "effects can be produced upon the trade with "India by the opening afforded by the last "charter of the East-India Company?—I have "reason to know that the exports of all "British manufactures and staple commodities "have been greatly increased since the open-"ing of the trade to India.

"From whence do you draw that know-"ledge?—From my own personal knowledge "in the trade, and from the statements, from "time to time, which are laid before the public.

"In what articles has the export principally "increased?—In metals, iron, copper, hard-"ware, glass-ware, &c.; but principally in "cotton manufactures and woollens.

" Has that increase been, in a great mea-
" sure, with our own settlements or with Java?
" —Speaking of the trade to India, I should
" divide it into two parts:—that which belongs
" to the Company's territories, and that which
" goes to Java and the Oriental islands. I think
" the greatest increase has been to the Com-
" pany's territories, but there has also been
" a great increase to Java, and abundant
" means exist of a great increase to the Oriental
" islands.

" With respect to the increased trade to
" the British settlements, has that arisen out
" of the demands of the natives for our manu-
" factures?—Yes, it has; certainly.

" Do you think that an increasing demand?
" —Most certainly; increasing upon a very
" great scale. I beg to say that I speak from
" positive knowledge.

" Are you sufficiently acquainted with the
" natives of India to know whether the preju-
" dices which have subsisted against the use
" of foreign manufactures remain in the same
" force that they did, as we have been gene-
" rally taught to believe, in former times?—

" During my residence in India, I never ob-
" served any prejudices, amongst the natives,
" which would prevent their buying any arti-
" cles with which they could supply them-
" selves to advantage."

Page 334—Mr. R. Rickard's 2d Examination.

" In your former examination you gave it as
" your opinion, that the trade between India
" and Great Britain had materially increased.
" Do you found this opinion on any documents
" you have examined, or on your general ex-
" perience of the trade?—I believe that the
" experience of every merchant in the
" City of London, concerned in the East-In-
" dia trade, will lead him to the conclusion
" that the trade has very materially increased
" in quantity and value of goods since the
" opening in 1813. I have no means of re-
" ferring to official documents, save such as
" are occasionally printed; but I believe I may
" safely quote the following:—In the Appen-
" dix, No. 24, to the Fourth Report of the Se-
" lect Committee of the House of Commons,
" on East-India Affairs, in 1812, there is an ac-

" count given of the actual sales of the East-
" India Company's and private trade goods
" for seventeen years, or from 1793-4 to 1809-
" 10, inclusive, which statement will, I think,
" give a tolerably accurate view of the extent
" of the India and China trade for the period in
" question; the sales on account of the East-
" India Company averaged for that period
" £6,007,564 per annum; the average of pri-
" vate sales, £1,999,485; total, £8,007,049.
" Now, as these sales by the Company are
" certified, in the same report, to have yielded
" a profit of about 25 per cent. over and above
" the actual cost and charges of the goods,
" we may safely conclude that the £8,007,049
" is the utmost annual value of the whole im-
" port trade for that period. Comparing these
" results, however, with the printed statement
" of the East-India Company's and of the free
" trade to and from China and India, from
" 1811 to 1819, inclusive, lately laid before
" Parliament, I find that the imports by the
" East India Company and the free traders
" (given, I presume, at their invoice cost only)

" average for that period £12,435,548 per an-
" num; showing, therefore, a decided and
" most important increase since the opening of
" the trade.

" In the 25th Appendix to the 4th Report, the
" value of goods from India alone sold by the
" East India Company in the seventeen years
" above mentioned, *i. e.* the total cost and
" charges, averaged £2,328,184 per annum;
" add the private trade, as above stated, less
" 25 per cent. for the alleged profit on the sales,
" or £1,499,614, and we have £3,827,798 for
" the total invoice value or cost and charges of
" the import trade of that period from India
" alone; but the imports, on account of the
" free and privileged trade alone, in the year
" ending 5th January, 1818, are stated at
" £5,097,748; in 1819, £7,098,650; and in
" 1820, £6,297,510. What the amount of the
" Company's imports from India has been
" during those three last-mentioned years, I
" have not the means of ascertaining; but,
" with every allowance for a decline in their
" trade, it will probably be thought moderate,

" from a review of these results, to state that " the trade between India and this country " has doubled, or nearly so, since it has been " opened to the energy and enterprise of free " traders."

Besides, as one great cause of the loss in the Indian trade has been the difficulty in procuring returns, is it fair in the Author of the Reply to add to this difficulty by preventing the export of so important an article, and then to exclaim that the trade is a losing one?

But our author is not contented with his old report of the Special Committee of the Court of Directors in 1802; he repeats the ingenious remark of his fellow labourer* that the East Indies does not encourage British manufactures so much as the West Indies, because, forsooth, the pots and pans and utensils in the sugar manufactories in the East cost a few pounds, whilst those in the West Indies cost thousands, and must be transported from Eng-

* Observations on the Claims of the West-India Colonists.

land. Such a total want of general principles is really amazing.

It is a novelty in the present advanced state of knowledge to urge as a *merit* that the cost of production is ten times as much in the one country as in the other. To buy as cheap as one can is the sound doctrine of the present day; and the cheaper you buy the more you have to spend. The argument and the quotation from the report of 1802 are worthy of each other. But the author soon arrives at what he thinks a most triumphant part of his case, and his eloquence warms with the subject:—

" Are tawny lascars," he asks, " to be sub-
" stituted for British seamen, and to these
" wretches, whom the law declares to be nui-
" sances, and obliges those who bring them
" here to transport them back to their native
" land, is the honour of maintaining the British
" flag, and the power of wielding the British
" naval thunder to be confided! If such plans
" succeed, the sun of British glory must, in-
" deed, set for ever." *

* Reply, page 21.

Now what is the case?—By the Register Act of 55 Geo. III. cap. 116, dated June 28, 1815, Lascars are expressly declared not to be British mariners within the meaning of the Act of 34 Geo. III. cap. 68; but it is provided, that seven British seamen shall be taken on board every India-registered ship, for every 100 tons register, whatever may be the number of Lascars, a proportion larger than that required for a British-registered ship. It even goes farther, and enacts that if a sufficient number of British seamen cannot be obtained in India, upon voyages originating in that country, and the vessel be from necessity navigated to England by Lascars, still on the return voyage, in addition to this Lascar crew, the full complement of seven British seamen, to 100 tons register, shall be put on board, and it thereby burdens the India trade with a double crew. Thus in the India trade is a nursery provided for British seamen in time of peace, and in war, as the King's proclamation may regulate the proportion of British seamen and Lascars, a large body of British seamen are

let loose for the royal navy, and the Lascars may take their place in the commercial shipping. Can the same advantage be derived from the West-India trade?

Does that trade offer such a nursery of seamen in peace, and afford such a supply in war? I repeat, increase the consumption of sugar by bringing it from India, and you increase the number of British sailors.

And is the sarcasm on the tawny Hindoos justifiable? has the Author of the Reply never read of the exploits of the tawny Seapoy, associated with the British soldier, in maintaining the honour of the British arms? The British military glory has been confided to the Seapoy, and he has honourably acquitted himself of the trust; and the British sailor, worn out by the destructive heat of a tropical climate, may yet benefit by the assistance of the Indian Lascar.

The question about the Indian shipping is apparently not understood by the Author of the Reply. It is simply this: ships built in British India, upon production of a builder's

certificate, were (as are the ships of all other British colonies and dependencies) entitled to a full British register: until the India Register Act was passed, which confined them to the trade between India and the United Kingdom and the country trade of India. This limitation was understood to be compensated by the country trade of India being confined to the India shipping, and by the British free-trade ships not being allowed to trade from port to port in India. But by the inaccuracy of another Act,* the whole of the country trade and port to port trade has been thrown open to British shipping; and they interfere with the Indian shipping in their own coasting trade. Now the object of the advocates for the Indian shipping is to *restore* the India-built ships to their privilege of a general register, as they no longer possess the equivalent for which it was surrendered; and they assert that the maintenance of a commercial navy in India, manned by Indian seamen, is of the highest importance

* The Circuitous Act.

to Great Britain as well as to British India; and that to sacrifice the Indian shipping to the jealousies of British ship-owners is a surrender of the just rights of a people placed under British protection. When these arguments are controverted, I shall be ready to retract the expression quoted from this work, by the Author of the Reply, p. 20. At present I am not aware of any receipt so excellent for raising a navy for foreigners, especially for America, as the adoption of that restrictive system, of which he is the advocate: the sugar of India, excluded at home, will be loaded on *foreign* vessels manned by *foreign* seamen, and will be carried to *foreign* ports.

But our Author, after treating the free-trade with contempt, as an idle speculation, comments severely on the Company, "the great monopolists of tea," stepping forward to assert free trade. Now, to this I answer—"the China trade is admitted by all parties to be a very delicate and peculiar trade; and Parliament has vested it exclusively in the Company, under a solemn charter for national advantage."

Whether this be expedient and wise or not, is open to discussion; but so the trade must remain until the charter be expired. But the existence of this monopoly should not preclude the Court of Proprietors from standing forward in vindication of the rights of India, of which the administration is placed primarily under their control. They are urged to take a part in this discussion, as the constitutional organ by which India is governed, not as merchants trading under a monopoly to China.

In another part of this work the effect of the exclusion of sugar on the Indian exchanges has been fully developed, and will, I trust, explain to the author of the Reply, what appears to him to be the inconsistencies of Mr. Prinsep, but what to those acquainted with the private trade, and with the nature of the East-India Company's connection with India, is perfectly clear and intelligible, and not "a paradox too "difficult for common understandings."*

The Author of the Reply informs me that I

* Reply, page 25

have overlooked the great maxim inculcated by the expression attributed to Mr. Fox. "of a "compact more solemn than an Act of Parliament could create;"* viz. that moral obligations, founded on principles of justice, are more sacred and binding than human laws.—I ask, in return, what obligation is more binding than that of the governor to protect the governed? When the British nation conquered and assumed the protection of its inhabitants, they contracted a sacred obligation to do justice to the natives of India, and, through the East-India Company, I call upon them to fulfill this sacred obligation.

The author allows that sugars, by being sent to England, might, indeed, affect the exchanges between England and India, and this concession is of great importance, in as much as the restriction on so staple an article as sugar, by its effect on the exchange, proves a serious injury to the native cultivator, the British merchant, the Company in its revenue, and its re-

* Reply, page 61.

mittance for home charges, and generally to all its civil and military servants.

Our author now enters upon the delicate ground of philanthropy. He comforts those, who, seeing the manufacturing industry of India affected by the heavy duties levied on them in England, and by their gradual supercession in India by British cotton goods, urge this country to encourage the agriculture of India, that the whole is "an unnatural state of the "market, and will correct itself, and that by-"and-by we shall return to our old course." (Page 27.) But at this gloomy prospect the British manufacturer need not be alarmed; facts are stubborn things; and we see that American cotton continues to be grown and imported at such low prices, as, with the power given us by superior skill, capital, and machinery, enables us actually to undersell the Indian at his own door.

But, aware of this difficulty, our author kindly offers his advice to the Indian cultivator, and recommends not only an extension of the cultivation of silk and indigo, but *the introduction of tea.*

This is a bold innovation for so cautious a disciple of the old school; but I fear, if the support of the Indian population is to rest on the introduction of a *new* article, it will starve in the mean time; and, besides, our author forgets that neither tea, indigo, nor silk, will supply the place of sugar, as a dead weight to the ships employed in the Indian trade.

But having thus provided for the wants of the Indian population, and quieted the fears of the philanthropists, the Author of the Reply earnestly solicits their protection for the slaves. Sugar, he tells us, they must grow in the West Indies, "for their soil is so arid that the "growth of provisions cannot be depended "upon."* Now, we well know that sugar requires a rich soil and frequent irrigation, and that where the cane thrives, Indian corn and provisions will grow. There may be lands in the West Indies fit for neither sugar nor provisions, and they must be abandoned; and to maintain at a heavy expense a forced cultiva-

* Reply, page 28.

tion of sugar on such lands, is a system entailing ruin upon the planters and misery upon the slaves, and the sooner it is given up the better.

The accurate and clear statements in the pamphlet of East and West India Sugar, completely settle this part of the question; and it is there shown what course ought to be pursued, if humanity to the slaves in the West Indies be the object in view; but, exclaims the Author of the Reply, (p. 23,) "it may be "proved, by the most unquestionable authority, "that slaves are employed in the East, as well "as in the West Indies;" and then follows a string of quotations from Dr. Buchanan to support this assertion, nay, he confidently assures the "pious friends" of the abolition, as he calls them, that by extending the cultivation of sugar, "a new slave-trade will be established "in the East Indies of infinitely greater magnitude than that which we have abolished in "our West-India colonies."

This point is evidently worked up, with much labour and study, for *effect*, but, after a careful examination of all the documents with-

in my reach upon the subject of slavery in India, I contend that I had a right to give an unqualified negative to the charge (which I had often heard alleged), "that encouraging sugar in the "East Indies will be *only employing slaves in* "the East, instead of slaves in the West." I never meant to conceal or deny what was notorious, that a certain degree of slavery exists in Hindostan, but those best acquainted with the real facts all agree that the numbers of the slaves, compared with the whole population of India, are insignificant; that, in the sugar provinces of Bengal, slavery is scarcely, if at all known; and that, in its character and operation, it is essentially different from the slavery in the West Indies.

Slavery is acknowledged by the Hindoo law, and also by the Mahomedan law; and the East-India Company, upon succeeding to the empire of the Mahomedans, having confirmed all laws then existing, slavery is permitted under the British government.

In the gradual progress of society from barbarism to civilization, slavery has been found

in every nation, but more especially in the East.

In India, from the religious distinctions of castes, and the contempt, almost abhorrence, in which the lower classes are held by their superiors, a state of subordination, analogous to slavery, became a part of the great structure of Indian religion. Its ill effects, however, are tempered by that very religion, for the law enjoins kindness to the inferior castes;* and the facility of escape from an unkind master, arising from the extent of India, and the similarity of language and race throughout the peninsula, renders the situation of the lower castes entirely different from that of the West-Indian slaves, and this is decidedly proved by the value borne by a slave in India, varying from £2 to £5.

Although the Author of East and West India Sugar clearly showed that the authority of Dr. Buchanan extended only to that part of India recently conquered from the Mahomedan

* Madras Report, dated December, 1819.

government of Tippoo Sultaun, from whence no export of sugar took place; and, although it is also distinctly stated, in the papers laid before the Court of Proprietors, that Madras receives sugar from China, and Bombay from China and Java; yet the Author of the Reply avails himself of the Doctor's authority, to establish his position of the superior degree of slavery in the East, regardless of these facts, and consequently of the inapplicability of his argument to the sugar provinces of Bengal.

Does not this imply an admission that the author is unable to establish his case of slavery in Bengal? would so acute a man, who obviously attaches great importance to this part of his argument, overload his pages and fatigue his readers with accounts of slavery on the *Malabar coast*, in provinces of recent acquisition,—*a thousand miles from Bengal*,—if he could exhibit a similar picture in the old territories of the Company, or generally throughout Hindostan? He does indeed, quote a passage from the papers laid before the Proprietors, (Appendix 3.) but what is the sum total proved?

that, whilst "the fact must be admitted that "slaves may be found in Bengal among the "labourers in husbandry, yet, in most pro-"vinces, *none but freemen* are occupied in the "business of agriculture."

In a document* of a more recent date (1817,) Mr. Colebrook observes, "in the lower pro-"vinces under this presidency (Bengal,) the "employment of slaves in the labours of hus-"bandry, is nearly, if not entirely unknown." From the same work, we learn with pleasure, that the East-India Company have done their duty in preventing the growth of that slavery which they found existing in distant parts of the immense empire which has devolved upon them. They have prohibited the introduction of slaves by sea in Arab vessels, or by land through Nepaul and Western India. The Court of Nizamut Aduwlut has been directed to prepare rules for the conduct of the natives towards their slaves; a registry is proposed, and every measure adopted to protect this degraded caste, short of an absolute interference

* Harrington's Analysis, vol. i. p. 715.

with the existing civil and religious rights and customs of the natives,—an interference contrary to those principles of deference to their prejudices, and of religious toleration, on which the East-India Company rests its government. If the West Indians are not satisfied, let them agree to a committee, and the real state of slavery in India may be investigated in detail.

Evidence of the strongest kind, from the commercial residents of the Company down to the missionary, who mixes with the lowest classes in the Indian community, can be brought forward. The subject is of vast importance; and no friend to the East Indies shrinks from the inquiry.

But, at the same time, I beg clearly to be understood, that I do not hold the West Indians up to censure as masters of slaves, far from it, all I complain of is—the West-Indian system, which resting *solely* on slavery, and estimating slaves as *capital*, forces production from their labour, and demands a remunerative price for interest of capital employed in their purchase. Nothing of this

kind is required for British India, and so far the cultivation of sugar in the East and West Indies may be properly said to be the cultivation of free labour as opposed to slave labour.

The Author of the Reply himself allows, that labour is so cheap in India as to render the rights of servitude of no value to the master, and the average price of slaves, as quoted above, establishes the fact. As to the alarm of the demand for sugar creating a demand for slaves, and raising their value,—it is utterly groundless; the state of the population in Bengal and the sugar provinces, the proportion borne by slaves to the mass of the cultivators, and the maxims on which the Company's Government is conducted, forbid our entertaining such an apprehension for one moment.*

Having shown the real nature of slavery in the East Indies, let us turn to the next observation of our author. He inquires, whether the natives of India are British subjects in the true sense of the words, and what is their value as well as their number?† "If we

* See Appendix (7). † Reply, page 45.

"have appropriated their territories in perpe-
"tuity to ourselves, if we have assumed the
"sovereign dominion of them, if we apply a
"large portion of their annual produce to
"the use of Great Britain, if we are avowedly
"resolved to maintain our possession by arms
"against all pretensions foreign or local,—if,
"by these measures, *as well as by specific de-*
"*clarations*, we show that we regard the inha-
"bitants as exclusively and absolutely our
"subjects, *all the duties of rulers must be in-*
"*cumbent upon us.*"*

I cannot add to the force of these words.—We have duties to perform towards the people of India, and amongst the foremost is that of relieving their agriculture and commerce from a heavy burthen, and of enabling them to raise sugar, a production congenial to their soil. If British India is not to be considered as an integral part of the empire, and, therefore, not entitled to the advantages of that connexion, in what a situation do we place her

* Grant's State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, page 24.

population? In other states her produce is taxed because it is British;—"these considerations" (says the French Minister of Finance, quoted in the Reply, page 105) "have determined us to propose an additional tax upon "foreign sugars, *particularly on those of India.*" At home, the West Indians demand their exclusion because they are not colonial. Is this fulfilling our duties towards a dependency? "But the West-India planter spends his income at home, or draws supplies from the "Mother Country, which give life and activity "to her domestic industry!"* As for the planter, it is to his non-residence his misfortunes are partly to be attributed; agents manage his property and swell his cost of production, and he taxes the Mother Country in the shape of a bounty, to enable the refiner to work up his expensive sugar with any prospect of profit in the foreign market. As for the supplies— dear enough will England pay for that demand, if she is forced to pay the West Indians their remunerative price; and as for the contributions of the West Indians to the Mother

* Reply, page 17.

Country, what a heavy charge will appear in the debtor side of the account when we ascertain the sums spent during war for their defence, and in peace for their government. If land-holders in India do not spend their fortunes in England, does not the author well know that few* Englishmen, whether in civil, military, or commercial, situations, make India *their home?* Can he pretend ignorance of the fact, that India is the country to which Englishmen resort to make fortunes—and England is the country where they spend them. Really, such statements as the following are scarcely worthy of an answer:—"We hear of "*native* princes and native land-holders and "cultivators, but they never return to Great "Britain to spend the fortune they have ac-"quired; all their profits centre and remain "in India, and the Mother Country neither "claims nor receives any part of the produce "of their labours.'" The following was the remark of Mr. C. Grant in the year 1792, and from it we may form some slight calculation of the immense benefits derived by this country

* Reply, page 47.

from India.—" It may not, perhaps, be too "much to say that, in the thirty years following "the acquisition of the Bengal provinces, "*this* nation, by public and private channels, "derived from them alone, exclusive of its "other eastern dependencies, or of the profits "of goods remitted, *thirty millions sterling.*"* But does the Author of the Reply seriously believe that 700,000 slaves, in the West Indies, and 20,000 planters can afford such equivalents for our manufactures as the population of British India, if its resources were properly encouraged. He may accumulate lists of exports and imports, but the common sense of mankind is against his assertion. As to the rights of the West Indians to the protecting duty under a compact, I repeat, "*that compact is broken.*"

It is useless to go over the old ground. In the settlement of the duties on sugars, at the periods of their several enactments, there was no intention to exclude East-India competition, such as it then was, up to 1813. In 1813, a sort of compact was made between an indi-

* C. Grant's State of Society, page 23.

vidual on the one hand and the West-India Committee on the other, which the West Indians have broken, by attempting, in many points, and by succeeding in some, to alter its conditions. From 1813, the situation of India has become more prominent, her resources have been called forth, and the colonial system, changed, mutilated as it is, must no longer be a bar to her produce being brought fairly into competition with that of the British West Indies. The report quoted by the Author of the Reply* is so utterly unsound in principle, with its alarms about "adding "rupees to the balance of trade against the "Mother Country;" and with "its fears "about the benefit of India proving the "destruction of the Mother Country, by the "immense drain of bullion that must follow "the encouragement of the export of Indian "sugar," as rather to excite a smile than add a feather to the weight of the argument. The attempted analogy between the claims of the West Indians and of the land-holders at home to protection is not to be maintained.

* Page 67.

I ask is India, a foreign country? and again I ask, what is the conduct of Great Britain towards Ireland? is Irish produce excluded? The analogy is between India and Ireland. And again, show me the *national* burdens under which the West Indians *do* labour and the East Indians *do not*, and I will agree to give a protecting duty to adjust the balance with equity, as I would grant the British farmer a protecting duty against the foreign grower of corn to the extent of *direct taxes* and burdens which the former bears and the latter does not. Let the West Indians measure the present amount of their exclusive burdens: I cannot. The demand of the Author of the Reply is,* let the East Indians be placed on the *same* footing, and the West Indians will require no protection. I reply, rather let the legislature adopt a more rational plan, and place both British dependencies on the same footing, *not* by adding a fetter to the East Indians, but by removing a chain (if there be any) from the West Indians. And I assert, this is not (as the Author of the Reply assumes)

* Page 77.

asking "that the whole colonial system of "Great Britain, which is the foundation of her "maritime power, should be abandoned, in "order to accommodate the views of the East-"Indian traders relative to the duties on "sugars."*

I contend that putting aside the merits of the colonial system, (abont which many wise men are sceptical,) it is only acting up to the spirit and intention of that system to admit the produce of British India into the home-market. In fact, it is enlarging the sphere in which that measure was intended to operate. Is maritime strength the object? I have proved that the East-India trade offers a superior means of *raising* British seamen in *peace*, and of *supplying* Great Britain with them in *war*. Is the enjoyment of cheap commodities from our own colonies or dependencies the object? Give the East Indies a fair field to compete with the West Indies, that the mother country may benefit by the cheapest. Is it to enable us to sell British manufactures? Can there be any comparison in the field opened in India and that

* Page 82

of the West Indies? Which country can give the greatest equivalents wherewith to purchase? Is it to enable our refiners at home to work up the raw material? I ask whether our present system, with its cumbrous machinery of draw backs and bounties, and with the avowed intention of the West Indians to reduce the supply in order to raise the price of sugar to a remunerative price, *is more calculated* for the attainment of that object *than giving encouragement to the East Indies to yield a larger and cheaper supply.* If the West Indians are not allowed to refine their own sugars, so neither are the East Indians. The duty on refined sugars is prohibitory to both. The West Indians call it a burden to be obliged to take their manufactures from Great Britain, and ask for a compensation in a restriction on the East Indies; whilst the East Indians are actually purchasing these manufactures in preference to their own, because they are cheaper. Can there be any real foundation for this complaint of the West Indians? Whatever America, especially the United States, takes from us we may conclude

she takes because she gets it as cheap as it is to be had any where else. Now, iron is shipped in considerable quantities from this country to the United States of America, though it there pays more duty than iron from Russia and Sweden. Cotton bagging goes in very large quantities to the United States. British linens are shipped to the United States and to Cuba; and wines are allowed to be imported direct: "Because, in the West-India "trade, two ships that sail out of three from "London, are under the necessity of taking "ballast, from there actually being no article of "dead weight in demand in the West Indies."* Is that any just ground for *obliging* the East-India ships to sail in ballast from India, when *profitable* dead weight in sugar can be had, if it were not for the protecting duty? This is, indeed, insisting upon a reciprocity!!

Connected with the shipping part of the question, I cannot refrain from pointing out a most erroneous representation of the sentiments of the Liverpool Committee, to be found

* Reply, page 84.

in p. 17. 18 "On this point (says the Author of the Reply) the Committee of the Liverpool Association express themselves, in one passage, with some degree of *diffidence*; *for they admit*, "that this is a question in which the maritime interests are involved, as respects the quantum of British shipping and British seamen that have been employed in the West-India trade." Now, who could credit the fact, that the following are the words actually used by the Liverpool Committee, in which neither diffidence nor admission, such as the Author describes, are to be found, but absolutely the contrary: indeed, the whole of his remark is the creation of his own imagination. "Your "Committee would have dropped the subject "here, were *it not barely possible* that they may "be called upon to notice two other topics "which have been laid before the public in "some late publications from the West-India "interest. It has been *gravely* contended, 1st. "That this is a question in which the maritime "interests of the country are involved, as "respects the quantum of British shipping and

" British seamen that have been employed by " the West-India trade; meaning thereby to " infer that these would be lessened by with- " drawing the protection which that trade has " hitherto enjoyed.

" 2d. That the revenue which the country " has derived from the duties on West-India " sugar would be lessened, provided the pro- " tection which the West Indians have hither- " to enjoyed was withdrawn." *These argu-* " *ments, if they can be called such, have been* " *used merely to catch the unthinking, and are* " *almost too frivolous to be noticed.*"*

And another most singular want of apprehension is remarkable in the quotation † from the Report of the Liverpool Committee. ‡ Those gentlemen observe that, neither the West-India planters nor government seem to consider any average price of West-India sugar, below 49*s.* per cwt. as a remunerating one; for until the average reaches that rate, the full duty of 30*s.* per cwt. is not charged. This

* Liverpool Report, page 28, 29.

† Reply, p. 84. ‡ Page 58.

price of 19*s.* with the duty of 30*s.* makes an aggregate price of 79*s.* per cwt. or of $8\frac{1}{2}$*d.* per lb. to the consumer.

Again, by the present system of duties, the bounty on export being the same, whether the duty paid be 27*s.* or 30*s.* per cwt. a clear, undisputed, and acknowledged tax is paid to force up the prices of sugar above their fair market price: but if the plan was adopted, of reducing the rates of duty, as the quantities increased, it is asserted* that we might in the end arrive at a point when the East Indies could supply us with sugar at $2\frac{1}{2}$*d.* à 3*d.* per lb. without any reduction of the aggregate amount of the revenue paid into the Exchequer.

Now, if having the choice of two plans, by one of which we saddle the country with a heavy duty, and the consumer with an article at $8\frac{1}{2}$*d.* per lb. whilst by the other we may reduce the rate of duty, and yet preserve the same revenue, and moreover obtain the same article at $2\frac{1}{2}$*d.* à 3*d.* per lb. we are required to choose the former, and to pay the tax and the

* Liverpool Report, p. 48.

high price, may we not expect that the next proposal will be to supersede the introduction of foreign wines, by raising grapes in hot-houses, &c.?*" This unanswerable statement so clearly deduced from sound principles is strangely misunderstood by the Author of the Reply; and he asks, with inimitable simplicity,—How are the people to get sugar at 2½*d.* per lb. without "any diminution of the revenue, when the duty itself is 2¾*d.* per lb.?" †

This is, however, introduced only to question the observation made in the Liverpool Report, that the West Indians are not content with the fair market-price; now I venture to assert again, *that they are not content*; and on the Author's own showing, it is impossible that they can be so.

The average price (duty included)‡ for 1822, he takes at 54*s.* 11*d.* and leaves the planter 3*s.* 5*d.* per cwt. or upon his calculation of the capital employed, a return of *one*

* Liverpool Report, p. 58. † Reply, p. 85.

‡ 27*s.* per cwt.

per cent.; now he allows that the planter is working on a capital borrowed at 5 and 6 per cent. interest. Can any reasonable man be satisfied under these circumstances? what then would such a man do? either attempt to raise his price, so as to pay him interest on his loan, and a profit, or give up his business. If he obtains the former, the West Indian must raise the price to 72*s* (with the duty 27*s.*) or 45*s.* ex-duty, to give him 20*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. instead of 3*s.* 5*d.* to enable him to pay 6 per cent. on a capital of £20,000, and higher if he seeks profit. or his capital be £25,000. Now, supposing the East Indian to be able to introduce his sugars at an average of 40*s.* *ex-duty*, or 67*s.* with equal (27*s.*) *duty*, is it fair to exclude him by a protecting duty of 10*s.* per cwt. more, thereby bringing the price of East-India sugar to 77*s.* per cwt., 5*s.* higher than West-India sugar.* Is this, I ask, fair by the East Indian, and just by the consumer?

And there is really no alternative for the West Indians but to raise their price, if the country will

* Reply, p. 86

suffer them, or to abandon their business. No reduction of duty can, under the present circumstances, affect the West Indians, *that* will only relieve the consumer. it must be a reduction on *quantity* and an *enhancement* of price. If Demerara pays the planter at the present prices or near them, the old West-Indian colonists, when the reduction of *quantity* takes place, by which alone the price can be raised, will be the sacrifice, and Demerara will flourish on their ruin. In the reduction somebody must be sacrificed, and it will necessarily be the dearest grower. What then are the West Indians contending for? is it for the Demerara planter? It is Demerara, a conquered Dutch colony of yesterday, that is to be raised at the expense of India—and for *her* is the restriction to be continued!!

The Author of the Reply, entangled by his former statements in 1809, cannot but acknowledge the correctness of the position that the surplus* governs the price of the whole, and that if the British West Indies produce *more* than

* See the qualification in pages 37 and 71

the consumption of Great Britain will take off, the price here cannot be higher than the price abroad; but, he says,* " in the *first* " place, the West Indians claim the continu- " ance of the protecting duty, because they " pay a valuable consideration for it, in the " restrictions to which they are subjected."

" Secondly.—They further consider that, " although the preference they have in the " home market is of little benefit to them while " the growth of their sugar so much exceeds " the home-consumption of the mother-country " as to render them dependent on the European " market, yet it may be valuable hereafter, " when their cultivation is reduced, as must " soon be the case if the present low price of " sugar continues, for the planter must then " raise more provisions and less sugar."

Now, what do we find in this passage.

1st. *The restrictions.*—Measure them and apportion the duty accordingly, or take them off; give us a Committee to prove

* Page 87.

what they are, and whether it be not wiser to relieve the West rather than to burden the East Indies? But no; *our Author opposed*, in his place in Parliament, the reference of the question to a committee. Is he then afraid of an examination of his own assertion?

2d.—Have we not here Mr. Robley's plan, and the plan which I contend a wise West-Indian planter can alone pursue, clearly laid down? Namely, to reduce the quantity and to raise the price; that is to say, to sacrifice a part of the West Indies—to burden the Mother-Country with a tax to support the remainder in a remunerative price, beyond the real cost of the article elsewhere, for it must be *beyond the cost elsewhere*, or the West Indians would not fear competition.

3d.—Have we not here a positive concession that the land in the West Indies may be turned from sugar into provisions, although, in page 28, we are told "that "the woods, which formerly attracted "the clouds and brought down rain,

"having long since been felled, the "soil is become so arid that the growth "of provisions cannot be depended "upon;" and, "if their master cannot "purchase provisions for the subsistence "of his negroes by the sale of his sugars "they must perish the *first* dry season." But, continues our Author,* "In the "next place, the admission of East-"India sugars would lead to an in-"creased cultivation of the commodity, "from the high expectations that would "be formed of the advantage likely to "result from this concession and an in-"creased importation into Europe, *in* "whatever market it might be sold, "would still further depress the price "and accelerate the ruin of the *British* "*planter*." Here he allows, 1st. That the repeal of the protecting duty would accomplish two things, viz. increase the Indian cultivation and benefit India—2d. *lower* the price

* Page 88.

" and *benefit* the consumer. But, ultimately," he contends " all this bright prospect would be " clouded over, prices would be too low, a " glut would ensue, and scarcity follow a glut, " and prices become extravagantly high; for the " price of a commodity depends not so much " on the cost of production as in the propor- " tion that the supply bears to the demand :"* and he appeals to the landed gentlemen for a proof that " cost of production does not re- " gulate the price." Now, what does, in the long run, keep prices *steady*—the power of drawing supplies from a great extent of production. In proportion as the range of production is narrowed—alternations of high and low prices are experienced. The larger the circle of supply, the steadier the price; but narrow that circle, and confine the supply to one spot, (which must involve high cost prices,) and *alternations of high and low prices*, to the ruin of the grower and the injury of the consumer are inevitable. To illustrate this posi-

* Page 89

tion, suppose we confined our supply of sugar to one colony, and that upon average years it produced enough for our consumption, by working lands, varying in qualities, some good and some bad, of course the price is regulated by the cost on the worst soils—for the worst soils would not be cultivated unless they yielded a profit, and the owners of the better soils (however cheap their production) would benefit by the demand for the produce of the inferior soils, and there would be varying returns, and consequently rents, but *only one* price.

Now as long as the supply equalled the consumption, and *no more*, all things would move smoothly, though the prices, in a country so restricted in its supply, (if that country be at all advanced in civilization and population,) must be higher than the average price abroad, because the cost of sugar on inferior soils fixes the price. But, once suppose the supply to exceed the consumption, and what follows? the grower is thrown for relief on foreign export, and the price at home levels with that abroad; his high cost price cannot be maintained, and he is

ruined. Again, suppose the supply reduced below the consumption, and a scarcity ensues, and we are in want at home, amidst plenty abroad. But, alter your system, take your supplies from two colonies instead of one, the average price is not raised by the high cost price of inferior soils on one colony, but on both, even when the supply does no more than equal the consumption; when it exceeds it, in proportion to that lower range of price is the relief by export: in a bad season in the West there is a fair probability of supply from the East, and *vice versâ* Thus you have lower and steadier prices. And what is the actual situation of the East and West Indies? The present system of our sugar laws, and of the West-India planters, forces cultivation on poor soils, and raises the average remunerative price; and are they not severely suffering from these alternations? For have we not the authority of the Author of the Reply, that the average price of sugar was 75*s.* 2*d.* in 1814,* and by the parlia-

* Reply, p. 8

mentary returns it was 31*s*. 0¼*d*. in 1822-3? and is not the only remedy, to which the West Indians can turn, *a rise in price?* In page 91, the Author of the Reply kindly informs the consumers that they need not fear that the reduction of quantity will *too greatly* enhance the price; for the Act 59 Geo. III. cap. 52, provides for the reduction of the protecting duty on East-India sugar on that contingency. Now, what is the safeguard against high prices afforded by that Act? The 15th section provides, that when the *average* price of Muscovado sugar exceeds 60*s*. per cwt. (mind it was in 1822-23* 31*s*. 0¼*d*. per cwt.) that *one shilling per cwt.* shall be taken off the protecting duty; and further, that as the price *rises* one shilling per cwt. progressively from that point, in the same ratio shall the protecting duty be diminished, until the price shall *exceed* 69*s*. per cwt. when the whole protecting duty ceases. Between the average price as above, and the remunerating price contemplated in the Act

* See Parliamentary Return, 26th Feb. 1823. No. 84.

quoted, the difference is 30*s.* per cwt.; and that simple fact will enable the public to judge what sort of a guarantee they possess against high prices. In truth, the point from whence the reduction of the protecting duty commences, is placed so high, as to render the whole arrangement a mere delusion.*

Far from the consumers suffering by an extension of the supply from the East Indies, the fertility and extent of India would guarantee to us steady and low prices, and (not *the shifting of the monopoly, as it is called by the Author of the Reply*,† from the *West to the East, but*)

* Since this was written, the West-India Petition has been made public. With reference to the gradual diminution of the protecting-duty, what does the petition say? "That the price at which the protecting-duty is liable to "be diminished, *furnishes only a bare remuneration*" to the West-India Planters, and this price, as stated above, is 60*s.* per cwt. ex-duty, *being full* 100 *per cent. higher* than the general price of sugar of the same quality all over the world. From this we may judge of the moderation of the West-India interest.

† Page 92.

the competition of the two would be productive of vast benefits to East and West Indies, and to the Mother-Country. Here let me refer to the papers laid before the Court of Proprietors.*

"It† is an axiom in political economy, that "the supply will be in proportion to the de- "mand, when human industry can attain it. "The natives of this country (Bengal) are "very industrious, and will naturally apply "themselves to the raising of that commodity "in which they have skill, and which will "afford them a ready and good profit."

"The soil and climate of Bengal are highly "favourable to the produce of sugar. Bengal "is capable, with fair encouragement, and "allowing the time necessary for increase of "produce, to export sugar to a great extent.

"The single province of Burdwan contains "5174 square miles, and almost the whole of "these are proper for the cane."‡

* Page 106, first Appendix.

† Report of the Board of Trade, 4th Sept. 1792.

‡ Page 109.

For the West Indians themselves the admission of East-India sugars into competition will prove a benefit; the sugar grown in the good soils will still have the advantage of the greater proximity to the home-market than the East-India sugar; a general economy will be forced upon the planter,—he will be extricated from the toils of the mortgagee,—he will have freights on a level with other trades,—supplies purchased with minute care and economy,—provisions raised on the spot, and the West-Indian slaves will not be overworked to satisfy creditors, but treated with kindness and attention; their habits improved, and themselves gradually prepared for emancipation;* and the West Indians will have an undoubted right to the most complete and entire free trade,—to that freedom possessed by the East Indies in all respects, *in theory* as well as *in practice*. The plantations that must be sacrificed will be those

* See the striking and eloquent Appeal of Mr. Wilberforce upon Negro-Slavery in the West Indies, just published.

of inferior soils, that never were fit for sugar or are worn out; and the planters who will not economize, must pay the penalty that every where follows extravagance. But the Author of the Reply,* observes, if any alteration be "made in the present system, let us inquire "whether it may not be effected on a more "liberal and comprehensive scale, that might "produce the most beneficial results to the "general interests of the British Empire. "Though no good reason can be adduced for "depriving the West-Indian planters of their "present protecting duty against East-Indian "sugar, many may be offered for admitting "the sugars of all countries, into which British "ships and British manufactures are admitted, "on the footing of the most favoured nations, "at the same rate of duty as the sugars of "India.' Then follows an able train of reasoning to show the propriety of admitting the sugars of Cuba and the Brazils.

I shall have no objection to consider this im-

* Page 93.

portant question, when it is brought before the public and the Legislature, with fairness and liberality. I have stated my own opinion, I am an advocate for competition, (page 4,) but I have also said what the author who quotes the former passages has omitted—"that if the "times are not ripe for a free trade, and the "Legislature will not allow foreign sugars to "enter into competition with British sugars, "let us give, with this reservation, full scope to "the principle, and admit all the sugars of Brit- "ish dependencies on an equal footing."*

The question, as to foreign sugars, is one that leads to a general alteration in our policy *that* with respect to East-India sugars does *not*. If we are to believe the author of the Reply, India is of less advantage to Britain than foreign nations; but I deny his assertions —I deny that the trade with India will supercede the use of British ships and British seamen—I deny that the inhabitants will not consume our manufactures—I deny that their religi-

* On Protection, page 39, 1st Edit.

ous prejudices prevent our carrying on a profitable commerce with them.—I assert that they will use British manufactures and produce if you will take their sugars in payment; and I repeat we may make Great Britain the emporium of Europe for India goods, if we do not drive the trade to foreign nations by the restrictions of our duties on the only article for dead weight of our Indian ships; for I am aware, as well as the Author of the Reply, of the central situation of Great Britain, of the peculiar advantages to be derived from her temperate climate, of the solidity of her merchants, and of the facilities of obtaining advances upon produce to any amount. But I positively deny that the West Indies are more secure than the East Indies. "Mr. Hastings, Mr. Rouse, and Mr. Cole-"brooke, the Select Committee, and Sir "Philip Francis, concur in declaring their "conviction that from pretended colonization "or from the increase of European intercourse "with the Indians, *no danger is to be feared.* "Mr. Hastings actually recommended coloni-"zation by permitting Englishmen to become

"purchasers of land. Mr. Colebrooke argues "strongly in its favour; and Marquis Welles- "ley treats as visionary the apprehensions of "danger from the intercourse of Europeans."

"The Indians are not now for the first time "made acquainted with strangers—not a single "instance can be produced of a revolt of the "Hindoo people against the Mahomedans, a "coarse, insolent, and oppressive people, mas- "ters of India for many centuries."* I have attempted to show the ground on which these denials rest, and the public must judge between me and the Author of the Reply—but—I ask for a Committee—I court inquiry—Will he join in the request?

The foundation of our naval power lies in our insular situation and free government. From the former proceed our immense coasting-trade and general commerce; from the latter proceeds security of person and property unexampled in the history of nations. These, all united, produce that wealth, intelligence, and civilization,

* Edinburgh Review, vol. xx.

by which Great Britain is distinguished: her high rank amongst nations determined, and her power consolidated. She depends neither upon the East Indies nor upon the West Indies: but it is her interest to extract *all the advantages* she can from *both*: and in the science of politics, as in morals, the greatest advantage is generally obtained by *doing justice*, and acting with strict impartiality. All that the East Indians implore Great Britain to give, is *justice*. Great Britain is mistress of India—it is her duty to protect the natives of India, to increase their prosperity, and to relieve them from every restriction that impedes their industry and cripples their commerce.

APPENDIX.

(1)
SUGAR.

Imports ending January 5.	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
	British Plantation.	Conquered Colonies.	East Indies.	Foreign Plantation.	General Total.	Total Exports.	Gross Quantity charged with Duty for Home-Consumption.	
							West.	East.
	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.	Cwt.
1815	2,859,077	535,110	43,789	597,347	4,035,323	2,002,110	3,030,042	12,916
1816	3,050,380	442,678	125,639	366,085	3,984,782	1,906,712	2,941,735	42,707
1817	3,070,228	363,758	127,202	199,360	3,760,548	1,663,618	3,220,594	33,130
1818	3,170,599	391,954	125,892	107,165	3,795,550	1,671,741	4,151,238	27,059
1819	3,227,540	437,950	162,394	138,063	3,965,947	1,695,628	2,672,226	24,775
1820	3,273,654	510,900	205,528	86,927	4,077,009	1,302,181	3,283,658	99,440
1821	3,049,061	574,258	277,228	162,994	4,063,541	1,659,556	3,661,730	83,231
1822	3,188,888	545,404	269,162	197,402	4,200,856	1,579,919	3,660,508	117,340
1823	2,555,410	560,300	228,170					

N. B. Under column B, are included for 1815, 16, and 17, the supplies from Surinam and the Danish colonies; subsequently the import is confined to Demerara and Berbice.

Column D, includes sugar from Martinique, Cuba, Brazil, &c.

Under column F, note the export in raw is calculated at 34 cwt. to 20 cwt. of refined sugar

The year 1823 is necessarily imperfect, from the accounts not being made up, but they will probably show a diminished import both of British plantation and East-India; and a continued large supply from the conquered colonies, with a material diminution of export.

It is observed in a respectable Summary published at the close of 1822, New London Price Current, no. 12, that the number of refiners' pans, at present employed in London, is 170, including 30 new patents; when a few years ago the number exceeded 500: and that the export of refined sugar in 1822, has materially fallen off, being 21,000 hhds less than in 1821.

(2)

Extract of a Minute of the Board of Trade, in Calcutta, dated 7th August, 1792.

" In this country (Bengal) the cultivator is either the " immediate proprietor of the ground, or he hires it, as " in Europe, of the proprietor, and uses his discretion in " cultivating what he thinks best adapted to the nature " of the soil, or the demand of the market. One field " produces sugar—the next wheat, rice, or cotton. The " husbandman is nourished and clothed from his own " ground; or, if he thinks it more for his interest to sell " the whole of his produce, supplies himself and his " family with the necessaries of life from his neighbour, " or the next public market. The Bengal peasant is " actuated by the ordinary wants and desires of mankind. " His family assists his labour and sooths his toil, and " the sharp eye of personal interest guides his judge- " ment.

" In the West Indies, the works are stationary. The " cane, a heavy material when just cut, must be carried " from the most distant parts of the plantation,—a very " laborious business. In Bengal, the mill, boiling vessels, " and covering-shed, are so extremely light, that they " are easily removed from field to field, as occasion re- " quires, and, consequently, prevent the labour of dis- " tant carriage of the cane. In the West Indies, the " whole labour of the ground is performed by *hand*, with " the spade or hoe; here, (Bengal,) the ox and plough, " as in Europe, lessen the labour of man, and facilitate " the production of the earth."

These are some of the most important parts of this able minute,—the state of the Bengal peasantry is here described by persons on the spot, and devoted to the commercial branch of the Company's administration. The whole is worthy of an attentive perusal; the contrast between the slaves in the West Indies and the peasantry in Bengal, affords the most satisfactory answer to those who still choose to assert that the former are substantially as independent as the latter.

It is observed in page 59, that the whole stream of the Company's policy is adverse to personal slavery;—in proof of this may be adduced, the permanent settlement of the land in Bengal, which, however erroneous in principle some may consider it, was unquestionably framed for the protection of the natives, both Zemindars and Ryots.

(3)

The Act 1st and 2d of George IV. cap. 106, regulating the duties on East-India sugars, imposes 5*s.* per cwt. additional on sugars clayed or refined, so as to be equal to clayed sugars.

The question at issue between the Customs and Messrs. Cropper, Benson, and Co. merchants at Liverpool, holders of sugars per Albion is, whether those sugars are so refined as to be equal in quality to clayed sugars. This is the first case under the new act. Now claying, as practised in the French West-India islands, is a process unknown in India; but with respect to West-India sugars, it *denotes a certain stage in the refinement of sugar*, and it must be allowed, that, by the processes used in India, it appears sugar does undergo various purifying processes, from the raw Goor to the finest Chenee.

Where, therefore, are we to place the point of equality with that state of refinement called clayed? It is a matter of opinion, and Messrs. Cropper, and the officers of the Customs at Liverpool assert the sugars, per Albion, are *not equal*, while the Board in London assert they *are equal*. To decide between them, let us understand what the article called clayed sugar is.

None is brought from the British West Indies; we must, therefore, seek for it in the foreign West Indies. Now the term clayed, all parties are agreed, comprehends brown, yellow, and white; all three differing in appearance and in exchangeable value. The white Bengal sugars, similar to those per Albion, are, in appearance, superior to the lowest brown-clayed in refinement, but inferior to the highest

white-clayed. To the use of a white cane in India, and the peculiarity of soil, the whiteness of the Bengal sugars may partly be attributed; colour, therefore, cannot alone be the test of refinement. In *grain* or *strength*, the white Bengal are inferior, perhaps, to the lower clayed. With such an indefinite standard, how is the Indian merchant to act? What sugars can the London merchant order to be sent home? Both are subject to the caprice, the whim of Custom-house officers: what is clayed in London is not clayed in Liverpool. Are all East-India sugars liable to the additional 5*s*. duty that are superior to the lowest clayed? Can this be the meaning of the Act? If there be no certain definition of clayed, and clayed varies as we contend it does, must not this be the inevitable consequence, and can such an absurdity be contemplated? Produce the sample of West-India clayed, define wherein its quality (resulting from artificial process, not from natural causes) consists; a certain degree of colour, a certain degree of purity, a certain degree of grain, and something *defined* will be given to the East Indians; but arbitrarily to say this sugar per Albion is *clayed*, is to assume the very thing to be proved; leave it open and all is chance, and subject to the fluctuating opinions of Custom-house officers.

The process of claying is not now carried on in the British West Indies, but by other processes, the West Indians obtain a sugar superior to the Bengal sugars, and to many foreign clayed sugars; and yet *that sugar* comes in at the low Muscovade duty; witness Jamaica and Barbadoes White. Extend the same terms that bind the East-India sugars to the West-India sugars, impose the 35*s*. per cwt. on the sugars from the West Indies, "clayed or refined, so as to be equal in quality to clayed," and we will try if we cannot also bring within the scope of the high duty the

more valuable White Jamaica and Barbadoes sugars. Then, indeed, there would be some reciprocity.

The imposition of the 5*s.* per cwt. additional duty, is altogether a monstrous injustice. The 10*s.* protection in the unauthorized compact of 1813, was intended to be a protection against ***all East-India sugars, white and brown;*** not as is now assumed by the West Indians, to be applied to the *Muscovades only.* Had the West Indians proposed a separation of East-India sugar in 1813, the highest protection of 10*s.* would have been placed against the highest or most valuable East India sugar, and a more moderate duty on the inferior or Muscovade.

The present attempt is a trick, a deception, and contrary to the very words of His Majesty's ministers, who positively declared the additional duty was ***not to be levied on the sugars usually called White Bengal sugars, (similar, in fact, to those per Albion,)*** but intended as a protection against the very finest sugar that might, upon an improved process of refinement, be brought from India, and *this* is the result.

(4)

Statement of the Value of Sugar exported from the Three Presidencies in India, to the under-mentioned Places, in the following Years. Extracted from the Report of External Commerce, received from Bengal, Fort St. George, and Bombay.

	1814-15.	1815-16.	1816-17.	1817-18.	1818-19.	1819-20.	1820-21.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
To the United Kingdom	1,139,403	1,060,010	1,141,113	1,326,462	1,389,787	2,482,864	2,097,865	10,637,504
,, Continent of Europe....	—	181,441	141,477	150,002	788,081	385,373	286,729	1,928,103
,, Mediterranean	—	—	12,689	161,419	124,303	32,458	62,992	393,861
,, United States of America	—	252,697	1,045,989	1,271,300	1,250,736	1,512,893	216,185	5,549,800
To South America	15,861	—	—	64,385	42,483	48,003	34,292	205,024
,, the Eastward Islands, &c. ..	164,809	231,630	264,946	83,982	77,807	197,044	117,426	1,137,644
,, China	—	—	—	—	—	1,120	—	1,120
,, the Arabian & Persian Gulphs	—	621,671	493,033	1,033,520	963,375	786,992	659,409	4,558,000
Rupees....	1,320,073	2,347,449	3,099,247	4,091,070	4,631,572	5,446.747	3,474,898	24,411,056

(5)
SUGAR.

Price per br. maund of 82lbs.	EXCHANGE PER SICCA RUPEE.														REMARKS.
	2s.		2s. 1d.		2s. 2d.		2s. 3d.		2s. 4d.		2s. 5d.		2s. 6d.		
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*	
3 Rupees	15	10	16	3	16	7	17	1	17	6	17	11	18	5	These Rates are calculated thus: — allowing 8 per cent. on prime cost for charges in India, £6 per ton for freight, and 8 per cent. on prime cost for waste and average damp. Reducing it to the cost in London per cwt.
4	19	0	19	9	20	3	20	11	21	4	22	0	22	5	
5	22	4	23	1	23	10	24	7	25	2	26	1	26	7	
6	25	8	26	7	27	4	28	2	29	1	29	9	30	8	
7	29	0	30	0	30	11	31	10	32	10	33	11	34	9	
8	32	5	33	5	34	6	35	7	36	9	37	9	38	11	
9	35	6	36	9	38	1	39	4	40	6	41	8	42	11	
10	38	10	40	2	41	8	43	0	44	4	45	8	46	11	
11	42	2	43	8	45	2	46	8	48	2	49	7	51	2	
12	45	6	47	1	48	9	50	4	52	1	53	8	55	4	

(6)

An Account of the Quanity of TEA *delivered, (including Private Trade and Prize) annually, from* 1800 *to* 1810, *inclusive; also of the Quantities exported to Foreign Europe.*

Years.	Tea Delivered.	Deduct Tea exported to Foreign Europe.	Remainder.
	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
1800	24,044,953	68,392	23,976,561
1801	24,868,625	97,127	24,771,498
1802	24,833,519	84,312	24,749,207
1803	25,737,469	35,511	25,701,958
1804	24,099,809	15,997	24,083,812
1805	24,201,443	16,187	24,185,256
1806	23,706,098	21,418	23,684,680
1807	23,608,569	9,509	23,599,060
1808	23,961,332	73,299	23,888,033
1809	23,418,596	203,531	23,251,065
1810	24,042,143	69,576	23,972,567

Sale Amount of Teas.

1810–11	23,548,468	1816–17	21,029,843
1811–12	21,527,217	1817–18	23,401,706
1812–13	23,068,033	1818–19	26,068,870
1813–14	23,424,832	1819–20	25,032,484
1814–15	27,820,643	1820–21	24,483,970
1815–16	26,234,244		

Appendix to Lords' Report, page 334–347.

(7)

To prove the anxiety in British India upon this important question, the public will soon be in possession of a petition from the European and native merchants of Calcutta, praying for an equalization of the duties on East and West India sugars.

A memorandum of the substance of this petition has been received—the original is not yet arrived.

Without impropriety, I think I may extract from this memoranda, transmitted to a friend, the two following passages,—the first showing the opinion entertained in Calcutta of the absolute necessity for sugar as a dead weight; the other proving that, whatever may be the opinion of "the Author of the Reply" as to the *existence of slavery in Bengal*, the *native* and European merchants at Calcutta do not seem to be equally aware of its extent, nor to entertain any apprehension that encouraging sugar in the East Indies will be only encouraging slaves in the East instead of the West.

The merchants state, first, that "their cotton-trade has suffered a most injurious depression under foreign competition. Their cotton piece-goods are either excluded from foreign marts, or are displaced by British fabrics in their own. Their grain is unable to contend against protecting duties called for by British agriculturists. Saltpetre will not yield a freight in time of peace, and unless some indulgence is extended to them in their last important staple, '*sugars*,' they will remain without an article of ballast for their ships, and will lose a principal means of making *returns* for the great and increasing value of

British produce and manufactures consumed in this country [Bengal], or circulating in the course of trade through all the neighbouring territories."

2dly, "The merchants abstain from pressing those arguments which *humanity* might dictate in support of the culture of sugars by *free-men* as superfluous, in an appeal to a British legislature, and unnecessary to their cause."

(8)

Value of the Exports of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures, from Great Britain to the East Indies and China, in the five Years, ending 5th January, 1823.

	Exports of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures from Great Britain to the East Indies and China.	
	Official Value	Declared Value.
Year, ending 5th January, 1819	£2,683,221	£3,861,454
1820	1,998,601	2,651,569
1821	2,978,451	3,693,168
1822	3,655,005	4,151,677
1823	3,569,325	3,771,961

Value of the Exports of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures, from Great Britain to the British West Indies, in the five Years, ending 5th January, 1823.

	Exports of British and Irish Produce and Manufactures from Great Britain to the British West Indies.	
	Official Value.	Declared Value.
Year, ending 5th January, 1819	£5,516,817	£5,603,359
1820	4,197,976	4,454,982
1821	4,043,693	3,860,260
1822	4,705,035	3,985,053
1823	3,906,730	3,143,928

Custom-House, 17th March, 1823.

*** The above official document, extracted from the Returns to the House of Commons, fully justifies the statement given by me in page 60; and affords the best answer to the question put by the Author of the Reply, page 48

THE END.

MARCHANT, PRINTER, INGRAM-COURT, LONDON.

A REPLY,

&c. &c.

Price 3s.

A REPLY

TO

THE ARGUMENTS CONTAINED

IN

VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS,

RECOMMENDING

AN EQUALIZATION OF THE DUTIES

ON

East & West Indian Sugar.

BY

JOSEPH MARRYAT, ESQ. M.P.

When many publications appear on one side, and no arguments are used on the other, the minds of men must naturally become biassed; and when once opinions are formed, even truth finds a difficulty to penetrate.

Third Report of Special Committee of E. I. C. Directors, 1802.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. M. RICHARDSON, CORNHILL, AND RIDGWAYS, PICCADILLY.

1823.

HUGHES, Printer,
Maiden Lane, Covent Garden.

A REPLY,

&c. &c.

It is incumbent upon those who propose innovations upon established systems, to prove that advantages will result from the alterations they recommend. More particularly ought they who urge the adoption of a measure that affects the interests of any other class of their fellow-subjects, to show, not only that the benefits to be produced outweigh the evils to be incurred, but that those benefits may be obtained, consistently with good faith and public justice.

Numerous publications have lately appeared, in favor of the equalization of the duty on East and West Indian sugar;* and the vast advan-

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Letters from Mr. Cropper to William Wilberforce, Esq.
Report of Committee of Liverpool East India Association.
Papers on the Culture and Manufacture of Sugar in India.
Suggestions on East India Trade.
On Protection to West India Sugar.
East and West India Sugar.

tages held out to the public from the adoption of this measure, are calculated to give it great popularity: but on due examination it will be found that these advantages, as far as British interests are concerned, are altogether visionary; and that no case is made out, which calls upon Parliament to alter our established system of colonial policy.

The first ground on which this measure is recommended, is the vast increase that will take place in the consumption of sugar, by admitting it from the East Indies at a reduced rate of duty. In support of this assertion, the advocates of the East Indian claims refer to the increase that has taken place in the consumption of coffee and cotton. In the year 1807, (they say,) the duty on coffee was reduced from 2*s.* 2*d.* to 7*d.* per pound. Previously to this taking place, the annual consumption of coffee in Great Britain was only 7537 cwt.; but immediately after the reduction of duty, the home consumption was increased so much, that in 1808 it amounted to 57,276 cwt.* These Gentlemen seem to forget, that coffee, in consequence of the reduction of the duty, was introduced into more general consumption as a substitute for tea; so that the revenue, instead of being increased, as they assert, "by this wise

* Report of the Committee, p. 38.

and beneficial measure," lost on one commodity what it gained on the other. In fact, this regulation was not adopted to increase the revenue, but on the policy of encouraging a colonial in preference to a foreign production, the very system which the East Indians are now endeavouring to overturn.

The consumption of cotton, they tell us, increased one hundred and twenty fold in the interval between 1701 and 1820; or in one hundred and twenty years:* but this, they admit, was not the consequence of a reduction of duty, and, therefore, in point of fact, has no bearing whatever upon the question. The improvements in machinery which enable us to undersell our foreign competitors in the manufacture of cotton, have occasioned this amazing increase in the consumption of that commodity. Sugar, however, is not only manufactured but eaten; and although the consumption in a manufacture may be indefinite, that in the human stomach is finite; and unless the East Indians can invent some new machinery, by which mankind may be induced to eat one hundred and twenty times as much sugar as they now do, the comparison

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* Report of Committee, p. 39.

between cotton and sugar cannot be deemed applicable.

We are desired, however, to believe, that the annual consumption of sugar in Great Britain, might be increased from 150,000 to 500,000 tons;* and, are told, "it by no means follows "that this ought to be assigned as the limit of "our consumption in sugar;"† and that "all "this might be effected without any loss whatever to the revenue."‡ To what extent the consumption of sugar will be increased by the reduction of price, is an experiment that has already been tried, and the result of which is actually before us. In 1814, the average price of sugar, as published in the Gazette, was *75s. 2d.*; in 1820, it was only *36s. 3d.*, being a reduction of *38s. 11d.*; and the effect produced was, that in 1814 the consumption was 121,605 tons, and in 1820, 151,571 tons. These statements are copied from the Report of the Committee of the Liverpool East India Association,§ and so far from supporting their assumption, "that they have "established as a point beyond controversy, that "provided the price of sugar be reduced to the

* Report of Committee, p. 47.

† Ibid. p. 46.

‡ Ibid. p. 49.

§ Ibid. p. 42.

"consumer, the consumption will be increased "to *an amazing extent*," prove, on the contrary, that a greater reduction than can possibly take place from the present price, instead of increasing the consumption, as they calculate, 350,000 tons, increased it not quite 30,000.

In order to show an ample provision against any deficiency in the supply of sugar, when their predicted immense increase of consumption takes place, the Liverpool Committee put the following question, in the shape of a sum in the Rule of Three:—"If a population under one "million can supply us with 200,000 tons of "sugar, what may one hundred millions produce, "where there is an extent of territory in propor-"tion, and where the soil and climate are equally "adapted to its production?" * The answer is, twenty millions of tons; a greater quantity than could be consumed by all the inhabitants of the universe, if they did nothing but suck sugar from morning till night. Really, such extravagant propositions, are more like the reveries of madmen, than the sober calculations of men of business.

A second recommendation to this measure, is the cheapness that would follow the great

* Report of Committee, p. 46.

abundance of sugar. The Committee "conceive "it will be made to appear, that if sugar were "only subject to a moderate taxation, or duty, "the British manufacturer could, in exchange "for his goods, procure it in any quantity, so "as to sell coarse qualities at 2½*d.* to 3*d.*, and "refined 5*d.* to 6*d.* per pound."* If Government would give up the duty, to the extent that the East Indians propose, leaving only 6*s.* 8*d.* per cwt., this might almost be done under the present system; for the actual price of sugar for the last year, exclusive of duty, according to the Gazette average, was less than 3*d.* per pound,† the duty being 2*d.*

* Report of Committee, p. 45.

† According to the Account laid before the House of Commons, and ordered to be printed, 18th February, 1823.

An Account of the Average Prices of Sugar in Great Britain, at the several Periods at which the Rates of Duty may have been regulated; from the 5th January 1822, to the 5th January 1823; with the Rates of Duty payable at each of the said Periods respectively.

	Average Price, exclusive of the Duty.		Rate of Duty.	
	s.	*d.*	*s.*	*d.*
5th January . 1822 . .	27	7½	27	—
5th May . . . 1882 . .	29	9¼	27	—
5th September 1822 . .	27	1¼	27	—
5th January . 1823 . .	27	2¼	27	—
	4)111	8¼		
	*s.*27	11		

7-8ths., or very nearly *3d.* more. But if the present duty be continued, the East Indian must cultivate sugar for nothing, the ship-owner must bring it home for nothing, the underwriter must insure it for nothing, the Dock Company must warehouse it for nothing, and the merchant and grocer must sell it for nothing, before these extravagant calculations of the Committee of the Liverpool East India Association can be realized.

Would the repeal of the protecting duty on East India sugar, which the private traders to that country express such extreme anxiety to obtain, really benefit the public or themselves? One of their own body has furnished the answer to this question. After giving a statement of the sale of a parcel of sugar from Benares, which left a loss to the importer of *2s. 10d.* per cwt., he proceeds thus:—"But sup-"posing the duty of *10s.* to be taken off, then "the buyer could afford to give *10s.* per cwt. "more, thereby bringing up the price of East "India to that of the same quality of West India "sugar; this would leave a profit to the im-"porter of *7s. 2d.* per cwt., and capital would "immediately flow into the sugar import busi-"ness; the consequence would be, a reduction

"of the 7*s*. 2*d*. in the general price of sugar, to "the advantage of the consumer."*

Here is a plain and direct acknowledgment, that if the duty of 10*s*. were taken off, the immediate effect would be, that the buyer could afford to give 10*s*. per cwt. more, and that the importer would not only save the loss of 2*s*. 10*d*. but make a profit of 7*s*. 2*d*.; thus monopolizing the whole 10*s*., and leaving the poor consumer nothing, except, indeed, what remained at the bottom of Pandora's box—"Hope;" the hope "of a future reduction of the 7*s*. 2*d*. in the gene-"ral price of sugar to his advantage, from "capital flowing into the sugar import busi-"ness."

A lure is held out to the British manufacturers, in the vast demand that they are told would take place for their goods, in return for East Indian sugars; and they are assured, "that the demand "for our productions has exceeded the most "sanguine expectations of those who are con-"tending for an open trade."† This is not the first time that other objects have been pursued by the private traders to India, under the pre-

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 25.

† Report of Committee, p. 15.

tence of encouraging the export of British manufactures. In the year 1792, a very long memorial was produced by the private traders, in which they introduced calculations of a very flattering description. To these suggestions Lord Melville, then Mr. Dundas, acceded, and the Company yielded, by appropriating 3000 tons of shipping, annually, for the service. By the Third Report of the Special Committee of East India Directors, printed in 1802, it appeared that the Company had then, according to the Act of 1793, provided annually 3000 tons, for the exportation of British manufactures, which, for nine years, amounted to 27,000 tons, of which only 1988 had been applied for. The Directors add, "But in order to shew that the clamour in "favour of British manufactures, at that time, "was a cover to other views, the following particulars of the goods shipped by one of the "most considerable houses of agency, may be "useful." They then give the enumeration of 822 tons of goods, with the following comment: "We thus perceive 424 tons of metals; but of "the great staple article of British manufacture, "woollens, one ton, and no more."* The metals, be it observed, were not sent out in a

* Third Report of the Special Committee, p. 15—18.

manufactured state, but for the purpose of being manufactured in India. At that time, the great cry was the export of British woollens; and the present cry of the export of British cottons, set up by the Committee of the Liverpool Association, and the assertion of Mr. Prinsep, that the far greater part will be found to consist of the staple products and manufactures of Great Britain, are merely repetitions of the same story.

That great speculative shipments were made to India, when the trade was first thrown open, at the expiration of the Charter, is very true; but it is equally true, that this trade, instead of answering, has disappointed the expectations of those who engaged in it. Mr. Cropper, of Liverpool, acknowledges this to be the case, in his Letter to his respected friend, W. Wilberforce, Esq.; for he states that he "is extensively engaged in the East India trade, which *he* "*finds not to be profitable.*" Mr. Prinsep confirms his statement, for he says, "it would be quite out "of all reason to suppose the concerns of a great "corporate Company, with all its inherent dis-"advantages, can have been better planned and "better conducted than those of individuals, "*and they have confessedly made a loss.*"* Official

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 64.

documents prove their statements to be correct, and the assurance given by the Committee of the Liverpool East India Association to be erroneous.

The quantity of British shipping employed in the trade to Asia, in the year 1816, was 98,521 tons; in 1817, 104,404 tons; in 1818, 109,871 tons; in 1819, 71,590 tons; in 1820, 74,593 tons; in 1821, 74,466 tons. Our navigation has been properly described "as the just measure of our "commerce, which necessarily follows its in-"crease and diminution."* Is it not, then, obvious, that if the mutual demand of the two countries for the productions of each other, had increased, the shipping employed in the trade between them, would have increased in the same proportion? And as the quantity of shipping has diminished, does it not follow, as a necessary consequence, that the demand for those productions must have diminished? These documents prove that the trade with India was overdone in the first instance, and has not since recovered.

A due consideration of the subject will show, that the import of sugar from India will

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Administration of Affairs of Great Britain, p. 104.

not encourage the export of British manufactures in the same degree as that from the West Indies. The East Indians import no utensils for the manufacture of sugar, but make them all, even the bags in which it is shipped. "In "Bengal, no expensive works, nor complicated "machines, are required; consequently, little or "no capital is requisite, beyond the support of the "cultivator. The mill which grinds the sugar "cane, and the earthen pots which boil the juice, "are every where made upon the spot, at an ex- "pense too trifling to be named. The former "costs a rupee, (2*s.* 1*d.*) the latter, an anna, (less "than 2*d.*) a piece; nine of which suffice to boil "the cane juice which one mill yields. The plough "and harrow, equally cheap and simple in their "construction, do not, together, cost in general "above a rupee; a hoe, eight annas; bullocks, "four to eight rupees a piece; plants, two rupees "per begah; which, with a shed, and a ryott's "hut, about four rupees, include all the requisites "and expense of a sugar plantation in Bengal."*

In the West Indies, on the contrary, the cost of a good set of works for a sugar estate is £5000 sterling. The planters import from the

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* Papers respecting the Culture and Manufacture of Sugar India, Appendix III. p. 57.

mother country, their mills, coppers, iron teaches, stills and worms, pots and forms, coals, the hoops and nails used in making their sugar hogsheads and rum puncheons, their tools of every description, clothing for themselves and negroes, the bricks and lime with which their houses and works are built, their furniture, and almost every thing that they eat, drink, wear, or consume; so that the British manufacturers have nothing to gain, but every thing to lose, by the transfer of the supply of sugar from the West to the East Indies.

Another alleged inducement to this project, is the great additional employment that would be furnished for British ships and British seamen. The East India Committee say, that "as the distance from which East India sugar "has to be conveyed is greater, a greater quan- "tum of British shipping and British seamen "will be employed, and the trade will remain "undiminished. This would be the case if the "quantity of sugar imported and consumed "remained the same; but as the price will be re- "duced, if your labours are successful, a greater "quantity will be consumed; and thus both these "important interests, instead of being injured, "will be benefited."* On this point, however, the

* Report of Committee, p. 29.

Committee of the Liverpool Association express themselves, in one passage, with some degree of diffidence; for they admit "that this is a question in which the maritime interests are "involved, as respects the quantum of British "shipping and British seamen that have been "employed in the West India trade."* All discussion upon this subject may be cut short, by quoting the following resolution of the General Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, held the 19th of June last:—"That the "existing limitation as to the size of vessels "employed in the East India trade is a part of "the compact with the East India Company, to "which the faith of Parliament is pledged." Another, "That this Court cannot consent to "the relinquishment of this part of the compact, "unless reciprocal concessions are obtained by "the restoration of East India built ships to the "rights of full British registry; and by the "admission of sugar from British India for "home consumption, on equal terms with sugar "produced in other dependencies of the British "empire."† From this document it appears,

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* Report of Committee, p. 29.

† Copy of Correspondence between the Commissioners for the Affairs of India, and the Court of Directors of the East India Company, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, the 5th July, 1822.

that the East Indians require, not only that East Indian sugar should be substituted for West Indian sugar, but that East Indian ships should be substituted for British ships; and, indeed, as ships built in the colonies are entitled to British registry, if colonial privileges be granted to the East Indies in one respect, no good reason could be given why they should be refused in any other. As the Directors of the East India Company formerly said, upon this very subject—
"It is thus that the question becomes extensive,
"and embraces the most important interests of the
"country. The land owner, merchant, manufac-
"turer, the British and Irish ships, seamen, &c.
"all must be sacrificed at the shrine of about fifty
"or a hundred Indian merchants and agents."*

The same parties, however, still maintain the same pretensions; and Mr. Prinsep, among others, although he expresses sentiments that might be expected to produce a different conviction. "If it be true," he says, "that her
"rank among nations depends upon her mari-
"time superiority, a position which her friends
"and her enemies seem perfectly agreed upon,
"it is no less true that maritime commerce is

* Third Report of Special Committee, page 60.

"the basis of that superiority."* Again, "It is "in the stout hearts and skilful hands of a "seafaring population, that maritime strength "consists."† Nevertheless, he inveighs against the blind selfishness of the shipping interest of Great Britain,‡ the prejudices and self-interest of the landholders, who desire a monopoly of the growth of timber, for the purposes of naval architecture,§ and, in short, all manner of persons who oppose his favourite project. The author of the pamphlet on Protection to West India Sugar, asserts the same pretensions in favour of East India built ships. "The Indian "shipping has a right to a general register; "policy and justice equally demand the conces-"sion of this point, in spite of the jealousy of "the shipping interest at home."‖ These India built ships, be it observed, are manned by Lascars, a tawny race of beings, whose nerves are shaken by every blast, whose toes and fingers are benumbed by every frost, and whom Mr. Prinsep himself describes as the "enfeebled native "sailors of our eastern territories."¶ These,

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 9.

† Ibid. p. 43.

‡ Ibid. p. 39.

§ Ibid. p. 45.

‖ On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 6.

¶ Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 44.

too, are to be substituted for British seamen; and to these wretches, whom the law declares to be nuisances, and obliges those who bring them here, to transport back to their native land, is the honour of maintaining the British flag, and the power of wielding the British naval thunder, to be confided! If such plans succeed, the sun of British glory must indeed set for ever.

These extravagant pretensions of the proprietors of East India stock, come with a very ill grace from that body, who enjoy the most extensive and close monopoly that ever was granted to any set of men; and who make the public pay annually for their supply of tea, £2,700,000 more than they would purchase it for, if the trade were thrown open.* Nevertheless, these Gentlemen,

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* The following statement lately appeared in one of the public papers:

"*Effects of the East India Company's monopoly on the price of Tea.*

"We beg leave to call the attention of our readers to the following statement of the prices of Tea in London and New York. The prices, in both instances, are *exclusive of duty.* The London prices are those for which the teas sold at the Company's last sale, and lodged in their warehouses, are now selling; and the New York prices are those of the teas in the

entrenched within their chartered privileges, refuse to make a concession, which, without being pre-

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bonded warehouses, and are literally copied from the "Price Current," published in that city on the 15th November last.

Tea.	*London Prices.* Average.		*New York Prices.* Average.	Difference.
Bohea . .	2*s*. 5*d*. per lb.		0*s* 11*d*. . .	1*s*. 6*d*.
Congo . .	3*s*. 2*d*.—— .		0*s*. 8*d*. . .	2*s*. 6*d*.
Souchong .	4*s*. 4*d*.—— .		1*s*. 6*d*. . .	2*s*. 10*d*.
Teranhay .	3*s*. 6*d*. —— .		not quoted	———
Hyson, Skein	3*s*. 4*d*.—— .		1*s*. 3*d*. . .	2*s*. 1*d*.
Hyson . . .	4*s*. 8*d*.—— .		2*s*. 8*d*. . .	2*s*. 0*d*.
	17*s*. 11*d*.		*s*. 0*d*.	10*s*. 11*d*.

"The difference in the average of the *five* species of tea, and they are those in general use, quoted in both places, is just 2*s*. 2*d*. per pound: and supposing the difference in the other species to be in the same proportion, it will follow, inasmuch as there are about 25 millions of pounds weight of tea annually consumed in Great Britain, that *the East India Company's monopoly costs the British public, in the article of tea only, the enormous sum of £2,708,750!* It is impossible either to controvert or dispute this statement. It is founded on official documents, whose accuracy neither is nor can be denied. Neither can it be contended that the price of tea is naturally higher in London than in New York; on the contrary, we have the authority of some of the best informed and most extensive merchants in the kingdom for saying, that were the trade thrown open, teas could be imported into England for 20 per cent. less than into America. Here, therefore, we have a tax of about THREE MILLIONS *sterling, imposed on one of*

judicial to themselves, would be highly advantageous to British commerce, unless they can obtain what they are pleased to term reciprocal concessions, but which in fact involve the ruin of British navigation, as well as of the British colonies.

Another recommendation of this measure is the improvement that it would occasion in the rate of our foreign exchanges. We are told, that the "large importation of sugar, will operate on the continental exchanges, your Committee will suppose, to the extent of twenty per cent.; when their tallow, which now cannot be sold in England under 50*s*., will be purchased at 40*s*.: their flax, which could not before have been sold in England under 60*s*., might be sold at 48*s*., and so on."* All these advantages may be procured by an increased importation of East Indian sugar into the Continent of Europe, and by remitting the proceeds of the sales to England; but they would be lost by

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the prime necessaries of life, for the exclusive advantage of a company of private merchants. It remains to be seen whether the public will submit to continue to pay such a sum for such a purpose. If they do not exert themselves to procure relief from so scandalous an imposition, with what face can they seek relief from taxes levied for public objects? So long as they submit to have their pockets picked by monopolists, they certainly deserve no favour from the tax-gatherer.

* Report of Committee, page 53.

these sugars being consumed in England instead of the Continent, which is the measure the East Indians are labouring to accomplish. By being sent to England, they might indeed affect the exchange between England and India; but they could only affect the continental exchanges by being sent to the Continent; for no commodity can possibly influence the exchange of a country into which it does not enter.

Mr. Prinsep makes such contradictory assertions respecting the state of the exchange between Great Britain and India, that one would really think he had forgotten the statements contained in the beginning of his pamphlet, before he came to the conclusion of it. In one passage he says, "The present state "of the exchange with India, and the uniform "complaint of the exporters, as to the difficulty "and loss in procuring remittances, after the "sale of their adventures in India, show the "necessity of opening our home consumption "to all the raw products of the East."* In another passage he asserts, that "the difficulty "of making remittances for the support of the "Company's establishment, and the payment of "the interest of its debt in Europe, was always

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 25.

"more imaginary than real. The increased and "increasing amount of the private trade, has "removed it altogether."* Mr. Prinsep appears to have one mode of reasoning for himself and his brother private traders, and another for the Company; but how the complaints of the exporters, as to the difficulty and loss in procuring remittances, can be well founded, while the same difficulty on the part of the Company was always more imaginary than real, and is now removed altogether, is a paradox too difficult for common understandings to comprehend.

Another argument used in favour of this measure is, that we are bound to provide employment for the population of India, who are thrown out of their usual occupation, by the increasing export of British manufactures. The Committee of the Liverpool East India Association say,—"The unrestricted introduction of our "manufactures into that country, together with "our underselling them in every market in the "world, must deprive of employment vast num-"bers of people; and until some substitute be "found, it must be very severely felt, not only by "the people, but by the revenue."†

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* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 65.

† Report of Committee, p. 55.

Mr. Prinsep confirms this statement, and says, "the millions of hands lately engaged "during a large portion of the year, in the "simple cotton looms of the native weavers of "India, are thrown out of employment by the "competition of British industry, aided by "machinery."* In another passage he exclaims, "Surely, this is the very consummation of the "triumph of machinery!"† He might have added, of inhumanity, too; but the philanthropy of the private traders, instead of arresting their progress in this competition, so profitable to themselves, but so distressing to the native population of India, does not prevent them from pushing it to the utmost extent. They merely ask what is to become of the industry of British India? And how is that general contentment of its population to be secured, on which depends the constancy of its allegiance?"‡

The accounts laid before Parliament certainly show, that an export of British cotton goods to India took place in the year ending the 1st January 1822, to the extent of near £800,000: but this is owing to peculiar circumstances, and therefore

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 30.

† Ibid. p. 18.

‡ Ibid. p. 51.

cannot be expected to continue. For some time the price of cotton was as low in Great Britain as in India, and the East India Company have actually shipped it from hence to China, in preference to ordering it, as usual, from the places of its growth in India. This unnatural state of the market must eventually correct itself; for the invariable effect of a very low price is, to discourage and diminish the growth of the commodity, till the scarcity restores it to its natural level. When this takes place, the British manufacturer will lose the temporary advantage, which, at present, enables him to undersell the East Indian manufacturer in his own market.

At a late General Court of Proprietors, one of the East India Directors warned the modern speculators, of the danger to which they exposed our empire in India, by driving the native cotton manufacturers to desperation, at being thrown out of employment, and superseded in the sale of their goods, by the introduction of British manufactures; and the authors of the ruin of these poor creatures are now endeavouring to find new employment for them, by starving some hundred thousand slaves in the West Indies. Such must be the inevitable consequence of superseding them in the cultivation of sugar; for in the old islands,

the woods which formerly attracted the clouds, and brought down rain, have long since been felled; and the soil is become so arid, that the growth of provisions cannot be depended upon. If their master cannot purchase provisions for the subsistence of his negroes, by the sale of his sugars, they must inevitably perish the first dry season; and the condition of the master, who must witness these scenes of distress and horror, would scarcely be more enviable than that of his slave. The very low price of sugar, which has deprived the planters both of their means of payment and their credit, together with the partial failure of the late crop, has already produced this state of things in Antigua; where the extremity was such, that the Governor actually drew bills upon the Treasury, as the only means of procuring provisions to save the negroes from starving. And if the schemes of these East India speculators are encouraged, the same effects will soon be produced in most of the other West India islands.

Mr. Cropper, although he professes to be actuated by the philanthropic motive of putting an end to slavery, avows the ruin of the West Indians to be his object. "There is evidently," (he says) "a rate of prices necessary to support slave culti-"vation, under a system which prevents their in-

" crease, and may require supply by fresh impor- " tations. At a lower rate slave cultivation may be " continued, but not the importation of slaves. " There is I believe a point still lower where every " system of slavery must be given up." This still lower point he proposes to attain by (what he calls a fair competition) some reduction, if not an entire equality in the duty on East and West India sugar. As has already been stated, in many of the old islands, if the master cannot maintain his slaves by the sale of produce, they cannot maintain themselves by the growth of provisions, but must inevitably starve; a result not quite so compatible with the feelings of the disinterested philanthropist, as with those of the interested merchant, who is " ex- " tensively engaged in a trade to India, which he " finds not to be profitable," but which might be rendered so by the destruction of his West Indian competitors.

May not the West Indians justly ask, in the words of Mr. Prinsep, " Where is the justice " or policy of relieving one class of sufferers, by " increasing the pressure on the other?"* and retort his own statement upon him, of the consequences that would ensue from equalizing the

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 49.

duties on East and West Indian sugar? To our transatlantic possessions, (the West Indian colonies,) "It threatens total destruction; loss of in-"come to the proprietor, of principal and interest "to the mortgagee; bankruptcy to the trader and "consignee; and the extinction of an extensive "branch of commerce and source of revenue, to "the nation at large. The continent of India, "though it has most to complain of, has the least "to apprehend; its injuries cannot extend beyond "the privation of a lucrative intercourse, it has "only now begun to enjoy or appreciate. Her "population will only be thrown back upon its own "resources,—compelled still to vegetate in igno-"rance upon the bare necessaries of life, to which "it has been heretofore confined."* A dispassionate consideration of the different consequences to the different parties interested, cannot but be decisive of the conduct that ought to be adopted on the present question.

True policy requires, that the industry of our colonies and dependencies should be so directed, as not to interfere with the prosperity of one another or of the mother country, but to produce commodities for which we are dependant on foreign powers. If any apprehensions

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* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 52.

are entertained, that the imports from India will not furnish the means of paying for the exports, the cultivation both of silk and indigo may be advantageously extended; and that of tea, for a supply of which we are in a state of humiliating and precarious dependence upon China, might be introduced. Probably, the East India Company may think their monopoly of tea more secure in China, than it would be in India; but this objection cannot be urged by the advocates of universal free trade, and might, upon its own distinct ground, be obviated.

The author of East and West India Sugar asks, why the claim of the West Indian planters to a preference in the supply of sugar, has not been extended to cotton, indigo, and other articles?* The answer is, that the supply of the mother country with these articles, never was given exclusively to the West Indian colonies; they only shared it in common with other countries, with the advantage of a trifling protecting duty; neither was the cultivation of them absolutely necessary to their existence. But sugar is their staple commodity, and if they are supplanted in the cultivation of the cane, they are left without resource. To make what they have already suffered from East Indian competi-

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East and West India Sugar, p. 22.

tion, an argument for extending it to their total ruin, betrays a want both of justice and of feeling.

A notion has been industriously circulated, that in the East Indies, sugar is raised by the labour of free men, and not as in the West Indies by slaves. Some pious persons, with tender consciences, have been so far duped by these representations, as to renounce the use of West India and to adopt that of East India sugar: but it may be proved by most unquestionable authority, that slaves are employed in the one as well as in the other. Doctor Buchanan was employed by the Marquis of Wellesley, after the peace that followed the defeat and death of Tippoo Sultaun, to make a journey from Madras, through the Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, for the express purpose of investigating the state of the British provinces in his route. He was selected for this undertaking, as being peculiarly qualified for it by his various acquirements, and particularly by his thorough knowledge of the language of the natives; and he was furnished by the Governor-General with letters to all the British residents in the different provinces, directing them to give him every possible assistance and information. He acquitted himself of this task with so much ability, that a copy of his work was deposited in the library of the East India Company; and soon afterwards was published, under the autho-

rity and patronage of the Board of Directors, to whom it was dedicated, with their permission. This publication, which appeared in 1807, not only proves the existence of slavery, but that the greater part of the agricultural labour of the provinces through which he passed, and where sugar is an important article of cultivation, is performed by slaves. The Doctor details the particular mode of cultivating the cane, in that part of the world; states, that rice and canes are grown alternately, and usually two crops of rice for one of sugar, to avoid exhausting the land. He gives drawings of their mills and other utensils; and describes the peculiar fineness of the clayed sugar manufactured by one individual, who is supposed to have been taught the process, which he keeps secret, by Tippoo Sultaun himself. The following quotations from this work prove these assertions respecting slavery.

" Lower Carnatic.

" Their farms they chiefly cultivate by slaves of the inferior castes, called Sudra and Panchum Bundum." (Vol. i. p. 19.)

" Malabar.

" From an enumeration of the inhabitants in one of the districts of Malabar, given by Mr. Baber, the number

of persons in each house is three 6755-10,000 parts. This would reduce the number of free persons in

Mr. Warden's circle to	78,925
Add slaves	16,574
Total inhabitants	95,499

(Vol. ii. p. 8.)

"By far the greater part of the labour in the field, is performed by slaves or churmar. These are the absolute property of their devarus or lords; and may be employed in any work that their masters please. They are not attached to the soil, but transferred in any manner their masters think fit; only a husband and a wife cannot be sold separately, but children may be separated from their parents, and brothers from their sisters. These are their modes of transferring the usufruct of slaves."

The author then proceeds at considerable length, and concludes thus:

"These two tenures are utterly abominable; for the person who exacts the labour and furnishes the subsistence of the slaves, is directly interested to increase the former and diminish the latter, as much as possible. In fact, the slaves are very severely treated; and their diminutive stature and squalid appearance, show evidently a want of adequate nourishment. There can be no comparison between their condition and that of the slaves in the West India Islands; except that in Malabar there are a sufficient number of females, who are allowed to marry any person of the same caste with themselves, and whose labour is always exacted by their husband's master;

the master of the girl having no authority over her, so long as she lives with another man's slave. This is a custom that ought to be recommended to our West India planters; and, if adopted, I am persuaded would soon induce the negro women to breed, and would give a sufficient supply of inhabitants, without having recourse to our annual importations from Africa." (Vol. ii. p. 370—372.)

"When a man's stock of cows is large, they are kept with the labouring cattle, in a house built at some distance from the abode of free men, in a place where the slaves are permitted to dwell when the crop is not on the ground; for these poor creatures are considered as too impure to be permitted to approach the house of their devaru or lord." (Vol. iii. p. 380.)

"MANAPURAM.

"At Manapuram a slave when thirty years old, costs about 100 fanams, or £2 14*s*. 7*d*.; with a wife he costs double; children sell at from 15 to 40 fanams, or from 8*s*. 2¼*d*. to 21*s*. 10*d*. A working slave gets daily three-tenths of a poray of rough rice, or about 36½ bushels a-year. He also gets annually one fanam for oil, and 1½ fanam for cloth, which is just sufficient to wrap round his waist. If he be active, he gets cloth worth two fanams; and at harvest time from 5 to 6 porays of rough rice. Old people and children get from one to two-thirds of the above allowance, according to the work they can perform." (Vol. ii. p. 406, 407.)

"KERAKUM-PURAM, KADAKUM-PURAM AND PORAWAY.

"There are 4765 slaves, making the population in all 31,097." (Vol. ii. p. 485.)

"NORTH MALABAR.

"The yearly allowance here established for a slave is, of rough rice, to able-bodied men, 148½ cubical inches; to able-bodied women, 103½; to old persons and children, 74¼. The average will be 18 4-10ths. bushels, of which one half is husks." (Vol. ii. p. 491.)

"CURUMBARA NADA.

"In Curumbara Nada, almost all the farmers (cudians) have slaves; there are a very few only that are reduced to the necessity of labouring with their own hands. Male slaves sell at from twenty to sixty old vir-raya fanams, or from 9s. 6½d. to 28s. 8d.; women sell at only one half of this low price. A male slave lets at four fanams a-year, and a woman at half as much; the persons who hire them providing for their maintenance." (Vol. ii. p. 495.)

"CANAMORE AND CHERICAL.

"The number of houses is 10,386, and there are 4600 slaves. The paniears (or hired men) are frequently flogged; and as their masters are not bound to provide for them in old age or during famine, they seem to be in a worse condition than the slaves. They work from morning till noon, when they are allowed an hour for breakfast; then they work until evening, and all night they watch the crop." (Vol. ii. p. 56.)

"TULAVA.

"The cultivation is chiefly carried on by culiaber, or hired servants; but there are also some maladalu, bought men or slaves." (Vol. iii. p. 35.)

"Having assembled some of the corar or coraivar, who, under their chief Hubashica, are said to have once

been masters of Tulàva; I found that they are now all slaves, and have lost every tradition of their former power." (Vol iii. p. 100.)

"In the northern parts of Tulava, are two castes, called Bocádaru and Batadaru, both of whom are slaves; when their master has no occasion for their work, they get no wages, but hire themselves out as labourers, in the best manner they can, for they have not the resource of basket making, nor of the other little arts which the corars practise. The master is bound, however, to prevent the aged or infirm from perishing of want." (Vol. iii. p. 106.)

"HAIGA.

"In the farms of the Brahmans, most of the labour is performed by slaves." (Vol. iii. p. 148.)

"SOONDA.

"Farmers, who are not Brahmans, unless their farms be large, work the whole with their own families; but rich men must hire servants, or keep slaves. Men slaves receive yearly an allowance of rice, clothes, and money, equal to £2. 8s. 7½d, the women 8s. 1d." (Vol. iii. p. 243.)

"BIDDERURU.

"There are very few hired servants, but a good many slaves, by whom, on the farms of the Brahmans, all the ploughing is performed." (Vol. iii. p. 280.)

The contrast between slavery in the East and West Indies, as above described, is very striking; and calls for some observations. In the East, slaves are let out to task-masters, who feed and work them, in consideration of an an-

nual stipend paid to their owners; and, therefore, the persons who exact the labour and furnish the subsistence of the slaves, are directly interested in increasing the former and diminishing the latter, as much as possible. Such a tenure, as Doctor Buchanan justly and feelingly observes, is utterly abominable; nor can it be wondered at, that their diminutive stature and squalid appearance should, as he asserts, indicate severe treatment and want of adequate nourishment. There is, indeed, the Doctor exclaims, no comparison between their condition and that of the slaves in the West Indies; where their master is their employer, and interest as well as humanity prompt him to treat them well. In the West Indies, all the slaves who are not employed in the house of their master as domestics, have houses of their own, with gardens and every domestic comfort around them; but in the East, they are obliged to herd with the cattle, these poor creatures being considered as too impure to be permitted to approach the house of their lord! How conflicting is this official account with the declaration, "that their services are so "light, and their state so happy, that they ab-"solutely appear as members of the family in "which they live, not like slaves." The allowance of provisions given to slaves in the West Indies, who are past labour, is uniformly the same as to those who are in the prime of life. This

regulation is not only custom, but law; and would be enforced, if necessary, against the master; but in the East Indies, Doctor Buchanan asserts, old people are reduced to half allowance! As in India, Doctor Buchanan tells us, they frequently flog the freemen who are hired labourers, it cannot reasonably be expected that they should exercise greater forbearance toward the slaves. The condition of these freemen is truly pitiable; for they are described as working from morning till noon, when they are allowed an hour for breakfast; they then work till evening, and then one would naturally suppose they were permitted to retire to rest; but not so, "all night they watch the crop." So that their toil is unremitted by night and by day, excepting the hour allowed for their meal, and the intervals employed in the necessary flagellations, to keep them up to this inexorable duty. The East Indians must certainly be acquitted of trading to the coast of Africa for slaves; for they have found out a much more easy and economical mode of supply, by enslaving a whole nation without travelling from home: as in the instance of the Corar, who were once masters of Tulava, but whom the Doctor found to be now all slaves. These quotations amply prove, that if moral considerations are to be taken into the estimate, or to be set up as grounds for claim to public favour, the pretensions of the East

Indian planters do not stand higher than those of the West.

Other writers on India confirm the testimony of Dr. Buchanan. Pennant, in his view of Hindostan, speaking of the funerals in that part of the world, says, "If the person is of rank, the pall "is covered with cloth and flowers, and a bullock "is sacrificed, and the head buried with the de-"ceased. If he happens to be an Upper Hill of "common rank, the head of one of his slaves is cut "off and burnt with him. If the Upper Hill "person is of high rank, a large body of his slaves "rush from the hills, seize an Hindoo and cut off "his head, and burn it with their chieftain."* This passage proves not only the existence of slavery, but the barbarous ceremonies of which the slaves are made both the agents and the victims.

Mills, in his history of India, calls the lower classes the slaves of slaves; as indeed they are, for the zemindars, rajahs, and nabobs, are only slaves of different degrees. The following extract is taken from that work. "The "business of the Sudras is servile labour, and "their degradation inhuman. Not only is the

* Pennant's View of Hindostan, vol. ii. p. 369.

"most abject and grovelling submission imposed "upon them as a religious duty, but they are "driven from their just and equal share in the "social institution. Even their persons and la-"bour are not free: a man of the servile caste, "whether bought or unbought, a Brahman may "compel to perform servile duty; he may seize "without hesitation the goods of his Sudra slave, "for as that slave can have no property, his "master may take his goods, nor let him give "spiritual instruction to such a man. He who "instructs a servile man in the mode of expiating "sin, sinks with that very man into the hell, "named Asamvrita."*

The writer of a very recent publication, mentions one of the classes, the Poliars, as slaves; † and in another part of his work, relates a story of a man offering to sell him his own son as a slave, which his attendant told him was according to the custom of the country. ‡

Mr. Cropper asserts, "that the opening "of the East India trade, is the trial of "a great experiment, that of a free com-"petition of the products of the East by free "men, and those of the West by slaves;" and

* Mills's British India, vol. i. p. 167, 168, 169, passim.

† Fifteen Years in India, p. 183.

‡ Ibid. p. 308.

the author of the pamphlet on Protection to West India Sugar, says, "But it has been as-"serted that encouraging sugar in the East In-"dies, is only employing slaves in the East "Indies, instead of the slaves in the West. "Now, to this I give an unqualified negative. "No slavery does exist in Bengal; or the nor-"thern provinces where sugar is cultivated."* The author of East and West India Sugar asks, "But in Bengal is not sugar cultivated by "slaves? Certainly not."† In contradiction to these bold assertions, the existence of slavery in Bengal is admitted by the East India Directors, although the description of it is softened, in a manner not easily reconcileable with the accounts already quoted:

"Slavery is not unknown in Bengal. Throughout some districts, the labours of husbandry are executed chiefly by bond-servants. In certain provinces, the ploughmen are mostly slaves of the peasants, for whom they labour; but, treated by their masters more like hereditary servants, or like emancipated hinds, than like purchased slaves, they labour with cheerful diligence and unforced zeal. In some places, also, the land-holders have a claim to the servitude of thousands, among the inhabitants of their estates. This claim, which is seldom enforced, and which in many instances is become wholly obsolete, is founded on some traditional rights acquired many generations ago, in a state of society different from the pre-

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 48.

† East and West India Sugar, p. 91.

sent; and slaves of this description do in fact enjoy every privilege of a free man except the name; or, at the worst, they must be considered as villeins attached to the glebe, rather than as bondsmen labouring for the sole benefit of their owners. Indeed, throughout India, the relation of master and slave appears to impose the duty of protection and cherishment on the master, as much as that of fidelity and obedience on the slave; and their mutual conduct is consistent with the sense of such an obligation, since it is marked with gentleness and indulgence on the one side, and with zeal and loyalty on the other. Though we admit the fact, that slaves may be found in Bengal, among the labourers in husbandry, yet in most provinces none but freemen are occupied in the business of agriculture. The price of their daily labour, when paid in money, may be justly estimated at little more than one ana sica, (being less than 2*d*. sterling.)"*

Labour in India is of so little value, that, probably, these claims to servitude are not enforced, because they are not worth enforcing; but let a new demand for labour be introduced, (in the increased cultivation of sugar,) which will render it more valuable, and these land-holders, who have a claim to the servitude of thousands, will immediately assert that claim; and thus a new slave trade be established in the East Indies, of infinitely greater magnitude than that which we have abolished in our West Indian colonies.

One very important consideration connected

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* Papers, &c. Appendix III. p. 80.

with the slave trade, will surely have great weight in leading men to decide on the expediency of admitting East India sugars into the home consumption of Great Britain. Every friend to the abolition of the slave trade must think it more desirable, with a view to the accomplishment of that great object, that the East Indians should continue to compete in the continental markets of Europe, with the foreign West Indian planters, by whom the slave trade is still carried on, than be brought into competition in the home market, with the British West Indian planters, by whom the slave trade has been abolished.

The preceding remarks on the state of society in India, have been called for by the repeated denials of the existence of slavery in that part of the world; and more particularly by the contents of the pamphlet, entitled East and West India Sugar, but which might with more propriety have been entitled Slavery and the Slave Trade. The great object of this writer appears to be, to excite such an odium against the West Indian planters, as will dispose their fellow-subjects to ruin them without pity or remorse, and to think that if they spare their lives and take all that they have, they treat them with unmerited lenity. The pamphlet consists of 103 pages, and in the 95th the writer discovers, "It is not necessary to pursue this subject

"into all the painful peculiarities of the West "Indian system, my object in this paper being "not to expose what I believe to be the many "great and crying evils of that system, but to "examine the arguments advanced for continu-"ing and even increasing the protecting duty "on East Indian sugars."* Though this recollection occurred too late to influence the conduct of the writer, it may teach others, not to lose sight of their professed object; and, therefore, the numerous invectives and exaggerations contained in this pamphlet, will remain unnoticed.

The advocates for India bring forward another argument, connected with the population of that country. They say, that "to refuse their request, is to sacrifice the "interest of one hundred and twenty millions "of British subjects, to that of less than one "million."† Before we suffer our imaginations to be dazzled and bewildered by this high-sounding contrast, let us enquire whether the East Indians really are British subjects, in the true sense of the words, and let us also consider their value as well as their numbers. Their advocates in some degree concede the first

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* East and West India Sugar, p. 95

† Report of Committee, p. 12.

point; for they pathetically lament, "that it "has been too much the habit, to consider our "West Indian territories as an integral part "of the country, while those of the East have "been considered in a degree as foreign."* The distinction is just: for the proclamation of the 13th Charles the Second runs thus: "We "do further publish and declare, that all the chil-"dren of any of our natural born subjects of "England, to be born in Jamaica, shall from their "respective births be reputed to be, and shall be, "free denizens of England; and shall have the "same privileges, to all intents and purposes, as "our free born subjects of England." Such was the encouragement held out to British subjects, to transport themselves and their capital to the West Indian colonies; but where is the same language used to the natives of Hindostan, who must be considered as subjects of the East India Company, and not of Great Britain, so long as that Company retain their territorial sovereignty?

The West Indian colonies have been justly considered as an integral part of the British empire, because under the colonial system, all the industry of their inhabitants is made subservient to the interests of the mother country, and all their prosperity is reflected back upon her. The

* Report of Committee, p. 34.

revenue of the British West Indian planter is expended either in the mother country, if he can afford to reside there; or, if not, in supplies drawn from her, and which give life and activity to her domestic industry. But in India, no British subject is permitted to cultivate the soil, or even to visit the interior, without a special permission, liable to be revoked. The Directors speak of "the fatal consequences, "which must arise from establishing the first "and most dangerous principle of colonization," and declare, that "the plans of the private "traders, if admitted, must terminate in the "destruction of the British empire in India."* We hear of native princes, and native landholders and cultivators, but they never return to Great Britain to spend the fortune they have acquired; all their profits centre and remain in India, and the mother country neither claims nor receives any part of the produce of their labours. What then is the value of India to Great Britain, however numerous her population? The account of imports and exports furnishes the answer.

Official value of Imports from India and China.

	1819.	1820.	1821.
Years ending Jan. 5th.	—	—	—
	£7,337,689	£7,537,563	£7,562,647

* Third Report of the Special Committee, p. 108.

Official value of Exports to India and China.

Years ending Jan. 5th.	1819.	1820.	1821.
Brit. & Irish prod. & manf.	£2,683,221	£1,998,601	£2,978,456
For. & Col. merchandize	502,529	374,380	294,360

Official value of Imports from the West Indies.

Years ending Jan. 5th.	1819.	1820.	1821.
	£8,347,235	£7,887,668	£8,011,335

Official valee of Exports to the West Indies.

Years ending Jan. 5th.	1819.	1820.	1821.
Brit. & Irish prod. & man.	£5,516,816	£4,197,975	£4,038,222
For. & Col. merchandize	267,737	292,033	308,820

British Tonnage to Asia.

Year ending Jan. 5th,	1821.	Tons 74,593
Ditto	1822.	74,106

British Tonnage to British West Indies.

Year ending Jan. 5th,	1821.	Tons 217,744
Ditto	1822.	230,830

* The writer of the Pamphlet, entitled "On Protection to West India Sugar," has stated, that the declared value of British manufactures (alone) exported in 1820-21, to China and India, was £3,713,021—that to the West Indies, £3,831,300—and in 1821-22 as follows:

Export to India and China	—	£4,087,020
British West Indies		3,985,053

If he is correct, the return to the House of Commons to an order, dated 22d March, 1822, (from which the above statements are copied,) is erroneous. He is therefore called upon to correct his statement, or to show from what more accurate source he has derived his information.

These accounts include the trade with China as well as India, and prove that the less than one million of inhabitants of the West Indies, are more valuable to Great Britain, than the boasted hundred and twenty millions of East Indians, (or even than the two hundred and twenty millions, throwing in the hundred millions of Chinese,) when viewed in the true point of comparison.

The author of East and West India Sugar, speaking of the export to the West Indies, says, "The amount of that export has been extravagantly estimated by some persons, even as high "as seven or eight millions. But, in fact, it has "seldom, if ever exceeded more than half the "latter sum, and of that three-fourths, at the least, "have been exported, not for the consumption of "the West Indies, but of Spanish South America; "so that the real export to the West Indies "for their own consumption has probably not "much exceeded a million annually."* The official accounts above given show, that since the year 1819, the exports to the British West Indies have diminished a million and a half; and it appears by a demi-official pamphlet recently published, that the exports to the

* East and West India Sugar, p. 64.

foreign West Indies and South America have increased in a greater degree than those to the British West Indies have diminished. In the year 1821, the former are stated to have amounted to £1,257,047, and the latter to £917,916.* Formerly all the exports to the Foreign West Indies and South America were made circuitously, through the medium of the free ports in our own West Indian colonies, but as they are now chiefly made direct, the whole of the present exports to the British colonies, (with a trifling deduction from those to Jamaica, for the purpose of exportation to the Spanish Main and Cuba,) may be considered as the amount of their own consumption.

The East Indian advocates contend, that the claims of the West Indians to a monopoly of the home consumption, or to any extraordinary protection in the market of Great Britain, have no just foundation: but in stating this part of the case, they, as usual, make admissions that militate against themselves: for they say—"This vested right, to which the West Indians "have so confidently adverted, has no other foun-"dation whatever than the Acts of Parliament, re-"stricting their intercourse to the mother country;"†

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* Administration of Affairs of Great Britain, p. 153.

† Report of Committee, p. 21.

—and again, "But, say the West Indians, a pro-
"digious amount of capital has been invested in
"our West India possessions under the faith of
"protection; where that faith is pledged your
"Committee are at a loss to discover, and they
"confidently assert that it has no foundation, but
"in the vague ideas of those who have stated it."*
According, therefore, to the opinions of these Gentlemen, capital invested under the faith of protection, pledged by Acts of Parliament, is a vague idea!

Mr. Prinsep maintains the same doctrine. —"The West Indian party has therefore
"been constrained to admit the protecting
"duty they have implored and obtained
"to be a downright breach of national eco-
"nomy, and a violation of the rights and in-
"terests of the British nation at large:"† but of this, as well as of many other of his statements, he has not condescended to supply his readers with any proof whatever. He then asks,
"what was the monopoly, upon the expectation
"of which the capital embarked in the British
"West Indies was induced to take that direc-
"tion? Assuredly not the exclusion of East
"India sugar by a protecting duty: such a

* Report of Committee, p. 22.

† Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 26.

" measure was never suggested until very
" lately."*

The author of the Pamphlet, entitled " On Protection to West India Sugar," asks,—" But " where are the records of their title? Great " Britain was first supplied with sugar through " the Portuguese. The price was exorbitant, " and encouragement was given in the nature " of a patent to cultivate the West Indies. From " 1649 to the present time, the chief supply has " been from the West Indies, but when the price " was high in 1792 and again in 1800, cultivation " in the East Indies was called for and encou- " raged by Parliament and Government, and " importations proportioned to the Company's " operations, under an exclusive monopoly, took " place. The article was not enumerated in the " table of customs, but the question of the duty " (£37. 16*s.* 3*d.* per cent. *ad valorem*) was " agitated during that period, as will be seen by " the resolutions moved and carried in the Ge- " neral Court, 15th March, 1792."† This writer, therefore, admits, in opposition to Mr. Prinsep, that the *ad valorem* duty did operate as a protecting duty, and was agitated in the year 1792.

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 27.

† On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 13.

All doubts on this subject may be removed, by referring to the papers recently published by the Directors of the East India Company. They state, that "The object of the meeting of the "General Court of Proprietors in 1792 was to "obtain a more favorable consideration for East "India sugars, in point of home consumption "duty; but in this particular, the East India "sugars have not been successful. The Appendix "exhibits a succinct view of the duties as they "have been varied and regulated from time to "time, upon both West India and East India "sugars; and it will be seen, that from the year "1799, the East India sugar has been regularly "charged with a larger comparative proportion of "duty, until at length it has been burthened by the "enactment of the 1st and 2d of his present Ma-"jesty, cap. 106."*

Here the Directors admit, that a protecting duty in favour of West India sugars always existed; and that the attempt made to interfere with it, in the year 1792, was unsuccessful. They further quote from the proceedings of the General Court of March 15, 1792, the following passage: "Sugar not having ranked among the "Company's imports at the time of establishing

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* Papers respecting the Culture and Manufacture of Sugar in British India—Minutes of General Court, p 9.

"the present tariff, it was not even named; "and can only now be received under the head "of manufactured goods non-enumerated, at "£37 16*s*. 3*d*. per cent. *ad valorem*."*

Indeed, very cogent arguments, as well as liberal sentiments, in favour of colonial protection, may be extracted from this publication. In 1792, the Directors made the following statement. "It is not your Committee's wish that the Company should become the hostile opponents or "avowed rivals of the West India merchants, in "any of the markets to which they have been accustomed, or are competent to supply. But as "in the present critical state of affairs, an opening "arises for drawing back to this country a large "portion of that foreign trade which it formerly "enjoyed, and which, as has been already shewn, "the French diverted from hence; your Committee "conceive it would be unpardonable in them to let "slip so fair an opportunity of lending their assistance to effect so great a national object. Under "the most favourable circumstances France ever "saw, it would have required many years to restore the island of St. Domingo to its former "flourishing state; this is, therefore, the moment "for exertions, and if they are properly directed,

* Papers, &c. Appendix I. p. 2.

"there is well grounded reason to expect Bengal "may be benefited by an export of this commodity "to the amount of more than half a million per "annum."*

The same feeling is expressed in the following letter to Bengal, dated 11th Sept. 1811.

"With respect to sugar, we shall briefly refer you to the resolutions of the General Court of Proprietors, of the 15th March, 1792, at which it was resolved, that the then enormous price of that commodity was owing to the annual importation being very unequal to the increased consumption in Great Britain, and the demand for exportation; and that the East India Company, having been called upon by the public to assist them, the General Court were of opinion that they could speedily and permanently supply a considerable quantity of sugar for the relief of Great Britain; and that, unless the Company did so, the Indian sugar trade, and the carrying trade attached to it, must inevitably be driven into the hands of foreigners, who had sent and were sending ships from various parts of Europe and America to India, to purchase that article. We have now to observe, that the reasons which induced the Company to engage in this trade have ceased; and therefore it is expedient, as well on general principles, as on account of the loss which has attended it, that sugar should not continue to form part of the Company's investment, except for such quantity,

* Papers, &c. Appendix I. p. 22.

and that of the finer assortments only, as may be wanted, in addition to the annual provision of saltpetre, for supplying our ships, regular and extra, with the quantity of dead weight which may have been stipulated for them, by special order, or by the terms of the respective charter parties, and conditions of service; to which quantities the ships must in future be necessarily restricted. Of sugar, we do not propose that any should be laden for Europe in 1812."*

From the above extracts it appears that the sole motive of the Directors, in interfering with the West Indians in the home market, was, that after the devastation of St. Domingo, the supply was not equal to the demand; or, to use their own words:—" Hence the article has already " risen to so high a price, that many of the lower " ranks of people in Britain must forego the use " of it; and the refining, a very considerable " branch of business, is much at a stand for " want of material."† When this deficiency ceased, the Directors discontinued their imports of sugar.

The following extract from the Report for 1818, on the external commerce of Bengal, may serve as an effectual counterpoise to many of the

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* Papers, &c. Appendix II. p. 18.

† Ibid. Appendix I. p. 58

declamatory statements of the private traders to India. "Although the importation of East Indian "sugar into Great Britain has not done much injury, "as yet, to the West Indian planter, it may happen, "if the price fall much here, that it may interfere "materially with the West Indian interests; and "in such case, the latter are certainly entitled to "legislative protection; almost the whole culti-"vation of the colonies in the West Indies is car-"ried on by British capital and by British subjects, "who are obliged to receive their supplies from "Great Britain, or her North American colonies, "and who cannot send their produce to any other "market than that of Great Britain. As long as "the price of sugar continues so high here, it "cannot be a considerable article of trade to "England, *even if the duties were equalized;* and "in so doing, the British Government would cause "a serious injury to the West Indian planter, while "they would not produce an increasing importation "of sugar from Bengal."*

When the British West India colonies were first settled, their trade was free and unrestricted; but in the year 1660, when they began to rise into importance, it was enacted by the 12th Charles IId. cap. 18,—" That no sugar,

* Papers, &c. Appendix IV. p. 46.

"tobacco, cotton wool, ginger, fustic, or other dying "woods, of the growth or manufacture of our "Asian, African, or American colonies, shall be "shipped from the said colonies to any place but to "England, Ireland, or to some other of his Ma-"jesty's said plantations, there to be landed under "forfeiture. And to make effectual this last clause, "for the *sole benefit of our own navigation and* "*people*, the owners of the ships shall give bonds, "at their setting out, for the due performance "thereof."

This Act was the foundation of our colonial system, which is one of mutual monopoly, and bound the inhabitants of the colonies to send their produce to, and draw their supplies from, the mother country, giving them her home consumption, for the sale of their produce, in return. The preamble to the Act of the 15th of Charles the Second, cap. 7, following up the former Act, declares—"That as the plantations "beyond the seas are *inhabited and peopled by the* "*subjects of England*, for maintaining a greater "correspondence and kindness between them, and "a firmer dependence upon it, and rendering them "yet more beneficial and advantageous unto it,— "in the further employment and increase of "English shipping and seamen, vent of English "woollen and other manufactures and commodi-"ties, rendering the navigation to and from the

"same more safe and cheap, and making this king-"dom a staple, not only of the commodities of "those plantations, but also of the commodities "of other countries and places for supplying of "them; and it being the usage of other nations to "keep their plantation trade to themselves; be it "enacted, &c."

Here, the principles of our colonial policy are clearly laid down, and openly avowed; and have only been relaxed, where they have been found to press so severely on the interests of the planters, as to defeat their own object; or, to use the emphatic words of Mr. Burke, "not only to tie, but to strangle." Under such circumstances, the sixth of George the Second, cap. 13, recites—"Whereas the welfare and pros-"perity of your Majesty's sugar colonies in Ame-"rica, are of the greatest consequence and im-"portance to the trade, navigation and strength of "this kingdom; and, whereas the planters of the "said sugar colonies have of late years fallen under "great discouragement, that they are unable to "improve and carry on the sugar trade, upon an "equal footing with the foreign colonies, without "some advantage or relief to be given to them by "Great Britain; for remedy whereof, and for the "good and welfare of your Majesty's subjects, "&c. &c."

No relaxations of this system, on the part of Great Britain, have been carried farther than the necessities of the West India planters absolutely required; and the removal of many of the restraints has been accompanied with burthensome restrictions and limitations. The Act passed during the last session of Parliament for renewing the intercourse between the West India colonies and the United States of America, subjects the produce of the United States to heavy duties, which operate as a bounty on the same articles, the produce of the British provinces in North America, and greatly enhance the cost of the supplies to the West Indian planter. Although it is just that he should contribute towards that protection to sister colonies, which he himself receives; yet taxing him, for the benefit of the Canadians and Nova Scotians, could be justified on no other principle.

The East Indian advocates make no distinction between the fluctuations to which all undertakings are liable, from the superior skill or more advantageous circumstances of others, and the destruction of colonies, in which a vast capital has been expended, under the sanction of legislative encouragement and protection, by a breach of that compact, which has been acted upon for nearly two centuries; and which Mr. Fox declared was " a compact more solemn than

"an Act of Parliament could create." This strong expression, the author of Protection to West India Sugar calls an oratorical flourish; overlooking the great maxim it inculcates, that moral obligations, founded on principles of justice, are more sacred and binding than human laws. Whenever the Legislature thinks it expedient, from views of general policy, to establish new systems which affect the property of individuals, and deprive them of their accustomed means of support, indemnities are granted. In the case of the establishment of the Wet Docks in the Port of London, compensations were made to the wharfingers, warehouse-keepers, lightermen, and various other classes of persons, to the amount of £1,200,000. How much stronger would be the claim of the West Indian planters, if they were deprived of that protection in the home market, on which they have so long depended, and for which they have paid so valuable a consideration, in the restrictions to which they have been subjected! Especially so, when it is considered that they have not the resource which all other individuals possess, of transferring their capital and industry wherever they think proper; but that long after their capital had been invested in the West Indian colonies, they were prohibited, by a new law, from removing their negroes out of them.

The author of the pamphlet, entitled East and West India Sugar, admits, that "Indemnity "may possibly be said to be due to the West In-"dians on the present occasion. In that case, let "it be claimed; let the nature of the ground be "fully and fairly investigated, and let it be met with "equity and even liberality. To this they are en-"titled, but to nothing more. They have no "more right to claim the continuance of a pro-"tecting duty on sugar, to the manifest wrong "of India and Great Britain, than they had "before a right to claim the continuance of the "slave trade, to the manifest wrong of Africa."* The same argument might with equal propriety be thrown in the teeth of the landed interest. They might be told, that they may have a claim for indemnity, but can have no right to the continuance of a protecting duty on foreign corn, to the manifest wrong both of the people of Great Britain, and of those countries from which foreign corn is imported. In both cases it may be urged, that some protection is due to producers who are fellow subjects, labouring under common burdens to which rival producers are not subjected. It is farther to be considered, that if you left yourselves dependent upon foreigners for your means of subsistence, you would give them the power

* East and West India Sugar, p. 29.

of reducing you to their own terms, by cutting off your supply; and, in like manner, if you left yourselves dependent upon foreigners for your carrying trade, you would lose it all, the moment you went to war, and with it the means of maintaining your naval power. These are paramount objects, and supersede all considerations either of economy or indemnity.

The same writer quotes instances of privileges being taken away, without any indemnity being granted. Among others, he mentions the abolition of the slave trade, and then says— "Another marked exemplification of the principle "here contended for is to be found in the measure "for putting an end to the exclusive privilege of "the East India Company, and throwing open the "trade of Hindoostan. The plea which the Com-"pany had to urge for the continuance of their "monopoly was infinitely stronger than any thing "which can now be urged in behalf of the West "Indian monopoly. They actually enjoyed what "the West Indians only fancy they enjoy. Their "monopoly was admitted."* But he forgets to state that this was a voluntary act on the part of the East India Company, whose charter was granted for a limited time only, and who consented to give up part of their monopoly, to secure the remainder for a more extended period.

East and West India Sugar, p. 29.

He gives the following other instances:—"At "the urgent solicitations of the West Indians themselves, the encouragement which for years had "been given to our North American colonies, has "been suddenly withdrawn, and the market of the "West Indies opened to the produce of the United "States. In like manner, after encouraging the "timber trade of Canada, in opposition to the "timber trade of the Baltic, until it had been nourished up to a trade of immense extent, the policy "which loaded the Baltic timber with a protecting "duty, has been found to be erroneous, because "detrimental to the interests of the community at "large; and notwithstanding the injury arising "from its abolition to the individuals who, on the "faith of Parliament, had embarked in the timber "trade of Canada, that protecting duty has been re- "pealed."* Both these statements are incorrect, in point of fact. The encouragement given to the British North American colonies was not suddenly *withdrawn*, for duties were imposed upon the produce of the United States, that operate as bounties on the productions of those countries. And the protecting duty on Baltic timber has not been *repealed*, but modified; being reduced from £3. 5*s*. to £2. 5*s*. per load, whilst it is only 10*s*. per load on timber from the British provinces in

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* East and West India Sugar, p. 31.

North America. Thus, in both these cases, the British Legislature has adhered to the just principle, of giving protection to the British colonies.

The East India Committee say "They "have discovered facts, which prove, incontro"vertibly, that up to the year 1813, the duties "were imposed for the sake of revenue only; "and that no such protection as the West "Indians seek, from a discriminating duty upon "sugar, the produce of our East Indian posses"sions, ever has been contemplated by the "Legislature."* The duty on foreign sugar has always operated as a prohibition, and therefore could not have been imposed for the sake of revenue. The import of sugar from our East Indian dependencies, till of late years, was never thought of. In the year 1792, when a temporary high price of sugar was occasioned by the devastation of St. Domingo, and made it an object to procure the admission of East Indian sugar into home consumption, it appeared that sugar was not included in the tariff of commodities to be admitted on payment of duty; and the only mode in which it could be brought in was, by entering it as one of the non-enumerated manufactured articles, at the *ad valorem*

* Report of Committee, p. 24.

duty of £37. 16*s*. 3*d*. per cent.* As Muscovado sugar then sold for 100*s*. per cwt., and East Indian sugar, being clayed, is of higher value, the duty upon it may be estimated at about 40*s*. per cwt., while that on West Indian sugar was then only 15*s*. As soon, therefore, as the high price of sugar subsided, which was very shortly the case, the entry of East Indian sugar, for home consumption, was discontinued. Between the years 1792 and 1806, the duty on British plantation sugar was increased from 14*s*. to 27*s*. per cwt., while no corresponding addition was made to the *ad valorem* duty on East Indian sugar. But neither this circumstance, nor the alteration of the duty on East Indian sugar, from an *ad valorem* to a rated duty, which took place in the year 1809, and brought the two duties within about 3*s*. of each other, ever excited the alarm of the West India body, because the East India Directors discouraged the importation of sugar to Great Britain, as will appear by the following extract from the Third Report of the Special Committee: "It is "found by experience, that private traders cannot "fill their ships without a large quantity of sugar "for dead weight; whilst it is also ascertained, "from experience, that if sugar is charged with the

* Papers, &c. Appendix I. p. 56.

" whole of the freight for the voyage, it frequently " leaves a loss; which loss will probably be in- " creased, when the rate of freight and charges " from the West Indies are reduced to their former " level, in consequence of peace. It may there- " fore become a question for consideration here- " after, how far the importation of sugar from the " East, which leaves a loss to the importer, and " the first cost of which is paid for by the public " in silver from hence, shall be encouraged, to the " prejudice of the West India sugar, the cost of " which is either spent by the proprietor in the " mother country, or paid for by the manufactures " and stores exported from home; for silver is " often received from the islands, but seldom sent " thither. The balance of trade is, as it always " must be in future, in favour of India; it is there- " fore highly important to probe the question, " which relates to the cultivation and importation " of such an article as sugar from the East, to the " bottom. The value of every rupee invested in " sugar, and imported from the East, is an addi- " tional rupee to the balance of trade against the " mother country. Some able and well-intentioned " persons have made it a question, whether sugar " may not be supplied from India to an almost " indefinite amount; but they are not aware that " the success, or, in other words, the benefit of " India, in this instance, would prove the destruc- " tion of the mother country, which cannot exist

" under the immense drain of bullion that must
" follow. If the East was in the same predicament
" with the West Indies, when the cost of the sugar
" was either spent in Great Britain and Ireland, or
" paid for in manufactures and stores, it would be
" consistent with the soundest principles of political
" arithmetic, to encourage the importation by
" every possible means. These observations are
" offered, because private traders can load very
" few ships without sugar, so that any material in-
" crease of the importation of the produce of India
" by them, must be in sugar. It is therefore neces-
" sary to ascertain, whether the general interests of
" the imperial empire, and the interests of a very
" numerous description of persons, West India
" planters and merchants, ship-owners, British
" manufacturers, &c. &c. &c. will not suffer to a
" greater degree than the East India Company,
" without producing any additional benefit com-
" mensurate to the evil either to the empire of
" India or to the mother country, if the request of
" the Indian agents shall be complied with."*

The author of the pamphlet, entitled East and West India Sugar, states, that " In the " year 1787, the duties on sugar stood thus: there " was chargeable on West Indian brown 12*s*. 4*d*.

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* Third Report of Special Committee, p. 40—42.

" per cwt., on West Indian white, 29*s.* per cwt., " on East Indian sugar, of whatever quality, " £37. 16*s.* 3*d.* per cent. *ad valorem*, being the " duty to which all unenumerated articles imported " from India, (sugar being one of these,) was liable. " But even then, supposing the average price of " sugar to have been 40*s.* per cwt., this would have " afforded little protection to West Indian sugars. " It would have been a duty of only 15*s.* 1½*d.* " per cwt. on East Indian sugars of all qualities."* The reader of this paragraph would naturally take it for granted, that the supposition of the writer agreed with the facts of the case, that the average price at which East India sugar sold was 40*s.* per cwt., and that consequently, it paid no more than a duty of 15*s.* 1½*d.* On the contrary, the East India Directors state, that the duty paid on the sugar they imported in the Princess Amelia in 1792, when their first importations took place, was 41*s.* 11*d.* per cwt.; and therefore the price must have considerably exceeded 100*s.*† On this, as on other occasions, this writer is about as scrupulous in misleading the public, as in vilifying the West India planters.

When the trade to India was about to be

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* East and West India Sugar, p. 11.

† East India Papers, Appendix I. p. 56.

opened, and not till then, the West India body, apprehending that the private traders, would, as predicted by the Directors, import a large quantity of sugar from India, in opposition to the policy acted upon up to that period, applied to his Majesty's Ministers for farther protection, by an additional duty on East Indian sugar: and after several conferences, in the year 1813, it was agreed, and an Act of Parliament was passed accordingly, that the duty on East Indian sugar should be 10*s.* more than that on West Indian sugar, to be reduced 1*s.* for every shilling that the Gazette average price of the West Indian should exceed 60*s.*;* thus admitting the principle of colonial protection, without losing sight of the interests of the British consumer.

Great complaint is made by all the writers on the East India side of the question, of an Act passed in the year 1821. The statement of the Committee is selected as the most concise; they say, " An attempt was made by the " West India planters and merchants, to lay a " further duty of 2*s.* 6*d.* on all soft sugar from " our territories; of 5*s.* upon all such sugar as " was equal to clayed; and a prohibitory duty upon " all sugar, not the produce of the British territories.

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* 59 Geo. III.

"That they succeeded so far, as to get an Act "passed, laying a further duty of 5s. upon clayed, "and the prohibitory duty upon foreign East India "sugar."*

That bill proposed no increase of the duty on East Indian sugar, but merely contained enactments, intended to guard against two abuses, which were of a nature highly injurious to the revenue, as well as to the West Indian planters, and to the British sugar refiners. The first of these, was the importation of sugars, the produce of China, Cochin-China, Manilla, Siam, Java, and other foreign countries, for the consumption of Great Britain, as if they were the growth of the British presidencies in India. This was a manifest imposition on the revenue; as these sugars were thus admitted into consumption, at little more than half the duty imposed by law on foreign sugars; and it was also an injury to the West Indian planters, whom it deprived of that protection which Parliament had given them, against the interference of foreign sugars in the home market. The other abuse, was the admission of clayed sugar from India into home consumption, without the payment of any additional duty.

* Report of Committee, p. 18.

Clayed sugar, if imported from the West Indies, is subject to an additional duty of *5s.* per cwt.; and refined sugar to a duty of £8. 8*s.* per cwt. The latter is intended to operate, and does operate, as a total prohibition; being imposed upon the principle adopted by Great Britain, of obliging her colonies to ship all their produce to her market in a raw state, as well as take from her all the manufactures necessary for their consumption. For some time past, sugars have been imported from India, as white as refined sugar, at the duty on common Muscovadoes; and the operation of this new Act goes no farther, than to subject such sugars to the additional *5s.* imposed upon clayed sugars from the West Indies, "if clayed, or otherwise refined or prepared, so "as to be equal to the quality of clayed sugar." It may be proper to observe, in explanation of this subject, that clayed sugar, or sugar from which the molasses are extracted, ought to pay an additional duty, because, if worked by our refiners, it gives a larger portion of refined sugar than can be obtained from Muscovado sugar, in which the molasses are left, and, consequently, a greater sum is paid in bounty on the export of the refined produce, than is received in duty on the raw commodity. The policy of imposing an additional duty on clayed sugar is justified on another ground; for by extracting the molasses, the bulk of the commodity is di-

minished, and less freight given to British shipping. The great object of Great Britain, in all her colonial regulations, has ever been to increase her carrying trade, as the foundation of her naval power; and Parliament would have disregarded all considerations, both of revenue and of naval power, had not the payment of an additional duty on clayed sugar from India been enforced.

Great opposition is still made to the payment of this additional duty, and the importers of sugar from India contend, that it is neither clayed nor otherwise refined or prepared so as to be equal in quality to clayed sugar. The futility of this objection is established, in the first place, by the evidence of the Custom house officers, who examine its quality, and assess the duty accordingly; and in the next place, by the following extract from the Papers respecting the Culture and Manufacture of Sugar in India, which proves that it goes through a process similar to that of claying, so clearly as to render any comment upon it unnecessary.

"The goor goes to the myrah (boiler) and he "purifies it by different processes, according to the "kind of sugar he wants to produce. The general "process is by boiling the goor. In some places, "the molasses are first drawn off from the grain,

" and the goor is then boiled, mixed with water, or " milk and water, and purified; in others, the goor " is only boiled and purified. Milk, lime, and ley, " from plantain ashes, are used to cleanse and " granulate the sugar. When boiled sufficiently, " it is put into earthen pots, and two particular " sorts of aquatic weeds are used to drain off the " syrup, as clay is by the Europe refiners. In " Rungpore and Dinagepore, clay as well as weeds " is used to draw off the syrup. The sugar thus " prepared is called cheenee; and in this state is " the greater part of what is sent to Europe and " America."*

The following assertion is made by the advocates for the East Indians: "Though your " Committee have deemed it necessary thus far " to discuss the claims of the West Indians, " founded upon the restrictions under which " they labour; it cannot be necessary to add " more, as Government have brought a bill into " Parliament, by which these restrictions will be " removed, and thus the whole ground upon which " the West Indians have contended for any pro-" tecting duty upon East India sugar will be done

* Papers, &c. Appendix I. p. 100.

"away."* Never was greater misrepresentation than is contained in this statement. The bill in question, was not solicited by the West India planters. On the contrary, it was deprecated by them, if to be considered as a ground for admitting East Indian sugars into home consumption on more favourable terms. This bill was brought in by his Majesty's Ministers, in order to quiet the apprehensions of the British ship-owners, who feared that unless they were permitted to bring West India produce to the continent of Europe direct, without first landing it in Great Britain, they might, when the vessels of the United States of America were again admitted into our West India colonies, be supplanted by them in that branch of the carrying trade. By this bill, therefore, West Indian produce was put upon the same footing, in that respect, as East Indian produce had before been, in order to enable the British ship-owner to compete with the foreign ship-owner.

A reference to our exports will show, that out of nearly 300,000 hogsheads of sugar annually imported from our West Indian colonies, not 1000 are exported to the continent of Eu-

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* Report of Committee, p. 36, 37.

rope in a raw state. The consumption of the continent, is not of Muscovado, but of clayed and refined sugar; and, therefore, the permission to ship sugar there direct, is not likely to be of any advantage to the West Indian planter. An Act giving a similar permission to any part of Europe south of Cape Finisterre, was passed many years ago; but not a single cargo of sugar has ever been shipped under it, from that period to the present moment.

Had the fact, however, been otherwise, how would this bill have done away the whole ground, upon which the West Indians pretend to any protective duty? Are they allowed by this bill, to manufacture, not only for themselves, but to come into competition with the manufactures of the mother country in every part of the globe? Are they permitted to import their supplies in ships under every flag; and to export in like manner, without any restrictions and limitations? No; on the contrary, with the exception of a few articles of the first necessity, from the United States of America, they are obliged to receive all their supplies from the mother country alone, in her ships and in articles of her growth, produce, and manufacture, and, in return, to ship all their produce to Europe in British vessels: and thus their industry is made subservient to the great objects of the mother country,

her manufacturing interests, and maritime power; but the East Indians are exempted from all these obligations. So long as the immense difference between the footing on which the East and West Indians are placed exists, so long will the just claim of the latter to a protecting duty continue. Let the East Indians be placed on the same footing, and the West Indians will require none: but till then their answer to these pretensions is, that they who do not submit to colonial restrictions, have no right to claim colonial privileges.

An argument introduced by the writers of the pamphlets on Protection to West India Sugar, and of East and West India Sugar, is founded upon the admission of the sugars of the conquered West Indian colonies into home consumption, at the same duty as those of the old British colonies. The former says, "If the old "British West India islands had a right to the exclusion of East India sugar from the home market, "much more had they a right to insist on the exclusion of sugar from the conquered colonies. But "what is the fact? The sugars of Dutch West "India conquered colonies are admitted, upon the "same duties as those from the old West India "islands."* The latter says, "No sooner was

* On Protection to West India Sugar. p. 19.

" Dutch Guyana conquered by his Majesty's arms, " in 1796, and the island of Trinidad, in 1797, than " the market of Great Britain was thrown open to " their produce, on the same terms on which the " produce of our own colonies was admitted. No " opposition whatever appears to have been made " to this measure, on the part of the West Indians. " Why was the right for which they now contend " waved on that occasion? Were the West Indians " blind to the consequences of waving it? It is " impossible to suppose it. Or was it because the " conquered islands, being cultivated by slaves, a " fellow-feeling and sympathy existed between the " parties, which led our old colonists to forego their " just claims to monopoly in favour of their new " associates, though they are to be made good " against the free labourers of British India? On " what ground was it that they admitted the sugars " of Demerara and Berbice, of Trinidad and St. " Croix, to the home market, but that they should " now exclude from it the sugars of Hindostan? " Is this not a partiality of the most monstrous and " unjustifiable description?"*

Much of this tirade might have been spared. The fellow feeling and sympathy in favour of slavery, so charitably imputed to the West In-

* East and West India Sugar, p. 14, 15.

dians, did not induce them to forego their claims. On the contrary, they used their best endeavours to prevent the cession of Demerary and Berbice, but their interests yielded to the views of general policy entertained by his Majesty's Ministers. All conquered colonies in the West Indies are immediately subjected to the same restrictions as the old West Indian colonies, and therefore have a just claim to the same privileges; but our East Indian settlements are not subjected to the same restrictions, and therefore have no such claim. Both these writers refer to a speech made in the House of Commons in 1809, on the propriety of admitting the sugars of Martinique into home consumption, which had for a time been excluded. The latter writer stiles it the most able argument he has seen in favour of the free admission of East Indian sugar to the home market; and adds, that if the reader in going over it will only take the trouble of substituting British India for the conquered colonies of France, he will find the speaker's arguments wonderfully strengthened by the substitution.* Neither of these writers notice the important distinction just made between the West Indian conquered colonies and the East Indian settlements. Let the latter submit

East and West India Sugar, p. 13

to all the restrictions imposed upon the former, and the author of that speech will be bound, on principle, to support the admission of their sugars into the home consumption of Great Britain on equal duties; but till then, he is consistent in maintaining, that they only who are subjected to colonial restrictions are entitled to colonial privileges.

The writers of two of the Pamphlets already referred to, greatly undervalue the restrictions imposed on the British West Indian planter by the Navigation Laws. One of them says, "But "the population of the West Indies must be sup-"plied with British manufactures only, and where "again is the practical grievance here? What "manufactures are cheaper than the British? Do "not the British manufacturers undersell all the "others in the East and the West? and are they "not excluded from the continent, because they "undersell the foreign manufacturer at his own "door?"* The other speaks still more positively. "British freights and British manufactures being "cheaper than the freights or manufactures of "any other country, it is no real hardship on the "West Indian to be confined to them, nor is it of "the slightest benefit to the East Indians to be

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 22.

"relieved from the restriction."* That some British manufactures are cheaper than foreign is true, but with respect to others the case is the reverse; and if some British articles are excluded from the continent because the foreign manufacturer would otherwise be undersold at at his own door, so are many foreign articles excluded from Great Britain, because the British manufacturer would otherwise be undersold in like manner. All the following articles can be imported from foreign countries at much lower prices than from Great Britain: iron, coarse glass, cordage, sail-cloth, Osnaburgs, cotton and coffee bagging, checks, linens of every description, silks of all sorts, paper-hangings, cheese, wines, brandy, geneva, and soap. This enumeration, which might be greatly lengthened, is sufficient to prove, that the restriction is a real hardship on the West Indians, and that the being relieved from it is an important benefit to the East Indians. With respect to British freights being cheaper than the freights of any other country, admitting that to be the case in time of peace, for the sake of the argument, will it be contended, that if Great Britain were to liberate her West Indian colonies from their present restrictions, neutrals would not carry their produce to Europe in time of war at less

* East and West India Sugar, p. 10.

than half the charge both of freight and insurance, which they now pay under such circumstances?

But, says the writer of East and West India Sugar, " If it can be shown that the West Indies " are still subjected to restrictions which are " attended with any disadvantage whatever, the " proper course, as I have already observed, is to " remove them, and to this course no East Indian " would be disposed to prefer the slightest ob- " jection."* It has been already observed, that if the East Indians will submit to colonial restrictions, they will be entitled to claim colonial privileges; but it is asking too much to require that the whole colonial system of Great Britain, which is the great foundation of her maritime power, should be abandoned, in order to accommodate the views of the East Indian traders, relative to the duty on sugar.

It is stated, by the same author, as a hardship on the East Indians, that " while our commerce with " British India is necessarily narrowed by these " restrictions on the import of her raw produce, " we refuse to admit a large proportion of her ma- " nufactured goods to consumption at all in this " country, and the rest only on paying a duty, " which is, in fact, prohibitory, and which varies

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* East and West India Sugar, p. 10.

" from £37. 10*s*. to £67. 10*s*. per cent. *ad valorem*. " We, at the same time, import our own rival manufactures into India, at a low duty of only 2½ " per cent. *ad valorem*."* In this respect, Great Britain acts upon her general system of policy as to foreign manufactures; but is this system relaxed in favour of the West Indians? On the contrary, it is enforced with far greater rigour. The West Indians are allowed to manufacture nothing; not even to refine their own sugar, but at a duty which operates as a prohibition. They are compelled, too, by law, to take all their manufactures from the mother country, while the East Indians are allowed to import those of every nation in Europe, and export their own in return. If their cause of complaint be just, let them seek the proper remedy, in a more favourable arrangement of duties on their manufactures and those of Great Britain respectively: but nothing can be more repugnant to justice, than to suffer this grievance to continue, and seek an indemnity for it, at the expense of their more than fellow sufferers, the West Indian planters.

The same writer observes, " The absolute necessity, to the successful prosecution of our trade " with India, of being allowed to bring home sugar " as dead weight, is now well understood. Without " it, each ship of 500 tons burthen must carry 200 " tons of ballast, in order to bring home the

* East and West India Sugar, p. 9.

"lighter goods."* "If it be said, that the East "Indian merchant may ballast his ships with sugar, "and afterwards send that sugar to the Continent; "it is manifest he would do this also at a great "disadvantage."† Two ships out of three that sail from London to the West Indies, are under the necessity of taking in ballast, for want of sufficient freight for the outward voyage. If the ships in the East Indian trade do the same on the voyage home, the hardship is no greater in the one case than in the other. The same observation applies to the reshipping of sugars from Great Britain to the Continent. In the same proportion that East Indian sugar is brought into home consumption, must West Indian sugar be turned out, and subjected to those double charges from which the East Indian sugar would be relieved.

Another complaint against the West Indians is, "that they claim the exclusive supply of the "British market, and are not even content with "a fair market price; but the people of England "are compelled to submit to a tax to keep it up, "a clear, undisputed and acknowledged tax, to "force up the price of an article to 6½*d.* which, "without any diminution of the revenue, the "people could get for 2½*d.* or 3*d.*"‡ The high duty on sugar, which enhances the price to the consumer, is certainly no advantage to the West

* East and West India Sugar, p. 98. † Ibid.

‡ Report of Committee, p. 58.

Indian planter; but on the contrary, is an injury to him so far as it may diminish the consumption of the commodity. It should be recollected, however, that a certain revenue must be raised, to pay the interest of the public debt and the expense of our national establishments; and that if the duty on sugar be taken off, some other duty must be imposed; so that the idea of any benefit to be derived to the consumer from the change is altogether fallacious. How the people are to get sugar at 2¼*d.* per lb. without any diminution of the revenue, when the duty is 2⅞*d.* per lb., the Liverpool Committee have not attempted to explain; and this assertion, among many others, shows their report to have been written with more haste than accuracy.

As to the West Indian planter not being content with a fair market price, the following statement will show that charge against him to be wholly unfounded. The average price of sugar per cwt. for the last year was 54*s.* 11*d.*,* which is thus divided:

	s.	*d.*
Duty - - - - - - -	27	0
Freight and charges of sale - -	8	6
Stores and Island expenses, exclusive of the rum - - - -	16	0
Planter - - - - - -	3	5
	54	11

* See Note, p. 10.—Gazette average, exclusive of duty, 27*s.* 11*d.*, and duty, 27*s.*

The planter's share of one hundred hogs-heads of sugar, of 12 cwt. each, amounts to £210. An estate capable of making that quantity, will have employed a capital of from £20,000 to £25,000; so that the statement made in a late resolution of the House of Assembly at Jamaica, that the planter does not make more than one per cent. of his capital, is fully confirmed; and if, as is too generally the case, he is acting in a greater or less degree with borrowed capital, for which he pays an interest of five or six per cent., it is evident with what rapid strides his ruin is approaching. Yet, under these circumstances, he is reproached with not being content with a fair market price.

This charge comes rather unexpectedly from the Liverpool Committee; for only two years ago, a petition from the Liverpool merchants and agents interested in the trade to the East Indies, was presented to the House of Commons, in which it is asserted,—" That the " prohibition of East India sugar for home consump " tion would not avail the West India planter; for " as this supply exceeds the home consumption, " and he is obliged to export a large quantity of his " sugar, he must be met by East India sugar on " the continent, and the home price of it must be " regulated by the general market of Europe.'

This reasoning is correct; and proves, that Great Britain is actually supplied with sugar at as cheap a rate as all the rest of Europe, the difference of duty only excepted; and while it shows that the only means of lowering the price of sugar is by lowering the duty, it also completely exculpates the West Indian planter from the charge of not being content with a fair market price; because it proves, that he is obliged to accept the same price that is paid all over Europe.

It may be asked, if this be so, why do the West Indians oppose the admission of East Indian sugar into home consumption on the same duty as their own? Indeed the question is asked by the author of the pamphlet on Protection to West India Sugar, in the following words: "Why then cavil at the East Indian for "seeking the home market; your surplus levels "prices at home with those on the continent; "therefore, if you wonder why the East Indian "does not go abroad with his sugar, he may "wonder why you do not allow him to bring his "sugar into the home market? For by your own "showing, there is, whilst any surplus exists, "but one price; and whether the excess be here "or abroad, cannot alter the case."

In the first place, the West Indians claim

the continuance of the protecting duty, because they pay a valuable consideration for it, in the restrictions to which they are subjected. They further consider, that although the preference they have in the home market is of little benefit to them while the growth of their sugar so much exceeds the home consumption of the mother country, as to render them dependent on the European market; yet it may be valuable hereafter, when their cultivation is reduced, as must soon be the case if the present low price of sugar continues, for the planter must then raise more provisions and less sugar.

In the next place, the admission of East Indian sugar into home consumption on more favourable terms, would certainly lead to an increased cultivation of the commodity, from the high expectations that would be formed of the advantage likely to result from this concession; and an increased importation into Europe, in whatever market it might be sold, would still further depress the price, and accelerate the ruin of the British planter.

The consumers themselves would ultimately suffer from that extreme reduction in the value of sugar, to which the East Indians look forward. If the price of that commodity were so low as to ruin the plant-

ers, the cultivation of it would be discontinued, and the glut be followed by a scarcity; so that the consumers would ultimately pay at an extravagant rate for the low price at which they had purchased it during a short time, and would experience the truth of the commercial maxims, that one extreme leads to another, and that low prices lead to high prices.

It has been said, that because the foreign planters can grow sugar cheaper than the West Indian planters, they can sell it cheaper; but the truth is, that the price of a commodity depends not so much upon its cost to the cultivator, as on the proportion that the supply bears to the demand. It does not therefore follow, that because the foreign growers of sugar could afford to sell cheaper than the British West Indian growers, they would do so. On the contrary, the fact is, that both sell at the same price, as is admitted by all parties; and the consequence of the disadvantages under which the British planters labour, is, that they are reduced to very great distress by the competition. For the illustration of this proposition, an appeal may be made to the Gentlemen of the landed interest. They find, to their cost, that the price of corn is not regulated by the cost of its production, but by the proportion that the supply bears to the demand; and they, as well as the West Indian planters,

are suffering under the effect of this very principle of political economy.

The author of the Pamphlet on Protection to West India Sugar, expresses great apprehensions of the consequences that will ensue, from the growth of West Indian sugar being reduced to the level of the home consumption. "At present," he says, "the West Indians export one-"fifth to one-third of their importation; and it is "this surplus above the wants of the home con-"sumers, that preserves the level price of the ar-"ticle with that on the continent: for it is the price "of the surplus that governs that of the whole. "Once bring the supply down to the consumption, "and exclude other growths, sugar may be high "here and low abroad, and the West Indian "planters may then obtain their high remunera-"tive price; but will not this be to the sacrifice "of the consumer and refiner?"*

After all that has been said about the high price of sugar, here is a direct admission, that the price in Great Britain is on a level with that on the continent; and that it must so continue while a surplus remains for exportation. How

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 34, 35.

then could the British consumers be benefited by equalizing the duty on East Indian sugar, while this surplus of West Indian sugar exists? Any further depression could only be trifling and momentary: for as soon as the foreign purchaser could make a profit on exporting it, he would begin to ship; and continue so to do, till the demand had raised the price to the former level.— But it is said, bring the supply down to the consumption, and exclude other growths, sugar may be high here and low abroad. The law, as it now stands, has provided against this contingency; for the 59th of George the Third enacts, that whenever the average price of West Indian sugar shall reach 60*s.*, the protecting duty on East Indian sugar shall be diminished, according to a regular scale; and be entirely withdrawn if West Indian sugar rises to 69*s.* per cwt. All that the West Indian planters, therefore, can possibly obtain by reducing their surplus, is such a remunerating price for their sugar as will relieve them from the severe distress under which they are actually labouring; but not a price that would sacrifice "the consumer and refiner."

One of these writers, after admitting that while the surplus of West Indian sugar exists, there is but one price throughout Europe, still

asserts,* "that the West Indies no longer yield "to the mother country cheap sugar for home "consumption,"† and recommends the admission of East Indian sugar, on the supposition, that the consumers will save one million per annum on its purchase.‡ The fallacy of these contradictions is obvious; but the writer is perfectly aware, that if the West Indians be once ruined, and their establishments broken up, the capital necessary to replace them will never again be found; and this is the object he is labouring to accomplish, in order to complete the monopoly of the East Indians.

The chief arguments that have been urged in favour of the equalization of the duties on East and West Indian sugar having been thus disposed of, it now remains to bring forward the objections to this measure. The first is, that while its advocates urge it on the principles of free trade, their object, in point of fact, is only to participate in an existing limited monopoly. The East Indians, who have nearly the whole world open to them for a market, would interfere with the protection given to the West Indians in the

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 59.

† Ibid. p. 61.

‡ Ibid. p. 62.

home consumption of Great Britain, and given to them for a valuable consideration, from the payment of which the East Indians are exempted. The sound principle to be maintained, whether applicable to British ships, British colonies, or British manufactures, is protection but not monopoly. Absolute prohibitions of every description are contrary to true commercial policy. The East Indian Gentlemen, in their great love of free trade, make no complaint of the prohibitory duty imposed on all foreign sugars, which is no less than 65*s.* per cwt.; the only fault they find is with the additional duty of 10*s.* imposed upon East Indian sugars. Is not this taking a most partial and disingenuous view of the subject? If any alteration be made in the present system, let us enquire whether it may not be effected on a more liberal and comprehensive scale, that might produce the most beneficial results to the general interests of the British empire. Though no good reason can be adduced for depriving the West Indian planters of their present protecting duty against East Indian sugar, many may be offered for admitting the sugars of all countries, into which British ships and British manufactures are admitted on the footing of the most favoured nations, at the same rate of duty as the sugars of India.

The advantages to be derived from this mea-

sure are apparent and deserving of attention. It recommends itself by being founded on those liberal principles of free trade, which we are all so desirous of adopting, as far as they are consistent with existing interests. Never could those principles be acted upon more opportunely, than at the present moment. South America has thrown off the yoke of Spain; and Cuba, though not nominally, has really done the same. The Brazils are become independent of Portugal. What an opening is here for establishing a beneficial intercourse with all these countries! A commercial intercourse with them has already been legalized, by the bills passed last session of Parliament; and if that measure be followed up, by taking off the present total prohibitions of their produce, and admitting their sugars into our home consumption on the same footing as those from our presidencies in India, we shall secure the greatest part of their trade, and derive from them almost all the advantages of colonies, without being at the expense of maintaining their establishments. The export of British manufactures to the Brazils, already exceeds that to India; * but we de-

* Exports of British manufactures to the Brazils, 1821 — —	£2,232,000
Ditto, East Indies and China, ditto —	2,978,000

The export of British woollens to China, so far back as the

rive this advantage under our treaty with Portugal; and now Brazil is independent, we cannot expect it to continue, unless some arrangement be made favourable to the introduction of her produce. We might also benefit South America, by giving her advantages, at the expense of powers whose conduct towards us would justify such alterations in our present system. For instance, Russia lately adopted a new tariff of duties, which excluded our crushed lumps from her consumption, by making a marked distinction, amounting to a prohibition, between sugar clayed in Europe and in any other part of the world. Might we not, in return, impose high duties on tallow made in Europe, and admit at low duties tallow made in America? By so doing, we should probably induce Russia to withdraw her invidious tariff, as well as favour South America.

The new situation in which Cuba and the Brazils are now placed, offers a favourable op-

year 1802, according to the Third Report of the Special Committee of Directors, p. 18, was £1,101,970; and, in common with our other exports, has probably since increased. But deducting only that sum, as the amount of the exports to China, those to India will be near £400,000 less than those to the Brazils. The exports for British manufactures for the year 1821, are taken from the Administration of the Affairs of Great Britain, p. 103.

portunity of inducing those countries to follow the example of South America, in abolishing the slave trade; and of making this condition the basis of an arrangement under which their sugars shall be admitted into the home consumption of Great Britain. By availing ourselves with promptitude and policy of the present state of things, we have a fair prospect of obtaining the most important advantages to the cause of humanity, as well as to the commercial interests of the British empire.

No valid objection can fairly be urged, even by the East Indians themselves, to the admission of sugar from these countries. Mr. Prinsep will assuredly offer none; if we may judge from the following passage in his pamphlet: "The "French and Spanish islands, Surinam, Brazil, and "the newly-emancipated states upon the northern "and southern continents of America, can produce "cheaper than our own islands, and must all "come directly or indirectly into competition with "them. Are all these likewise to remain for ever "excluded from the supply of the home market, "as well as the produce of Eastern Asia?"*— Nor can the author of the pamphlet on Protection to West India Sugar; for he says, "I "am no advocate for conferring a partial benefit

* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 29.

"either on the East or the West Indians, but I "am an advocate for competition."* The sugar refiners will not; for they say, "A free trade is "all they desire, but against a free trade partially "granted they protest, as against the worst and "most oppressive species of monopoly."†— The West Indians can offer none; for provided their present protecting duty be continued, they will retain all the advantages they now enjoy. The price of sugar throughout Europe regulates the price here; and whether foreign sugars come to the Continent or to Great Britain, the effect upon their interests will be precisely the same.

It appears incontrovertible that every country that admits British ships and British manufactures, on the footing of the most favoured nations, gives us all the advantages that we derive from India, and, in some respects, much greater. Having no shipping of their own, they will necessarily employ British ships and British seamen, while the East Indians are attempting to supersede the use of both, by teak-built ships, manned with lascars. The inhabitants of these countries do not manufacture for themselves, and are in the habit of consuming British manufactures;

* On Protection to West India Sugar, p. 4.

† Ibid. p. 38.

but the East Indians do manufacture for themselves, and use their own manufactures. They are besides an immutable race, fixed by their castes to remain exactly in the same condition of life in which they were born; and therefore, every attempt to change their habits and manners, or to substitute British for Indian manufactures among them, except in a very partial degree, must prove abortive. In the other countries, the use of British manufactures will only be bounded by their means of paying for them; those means, from the value and variety of their productions, are already great, and will rapidly increase, now that they have emancipated themselves from the state of oppression and subjection in which they have so long been held.

Various British interests will also be benefited by this measure, particularly the manufactory of sugar refining. The sugar of India is, in general, soft, and unfit for the use of the refiners:* and the introduction of it into our home consumption would be injurious to them, as it would introduce the practice here, that prevails upon the continent, of using clayed instead of refined sugar. The sugars of Cuba

* Papers respecting the Manufacture and Culture of Sugar in British India. Appendix I. p. 4, 5.

and the Brazils, on the contrary, are strong, and well adapted for the use of the refiners. For some years past, the number of our refineries has been gradually diminishing; and those upon the continent of Europe, where the sugars of the Brazils and Cuba are admitted into consumption, have greatly increased. Hamburgh, Bremen, and Russia, countries without any sugar colonies of their own, are proofs of this fact; and the refineries established there by our excluding these sugars, would be transferred here, if we admitted them into our home consumption. Although Mr. Prinsep may speak of "the absurd "monopoly of sugar refining, for the advantage "of some score or two of Germans domiciled "amongst us," perhaps no manufactory can be named, which gives encouragement in so great a degree, to the most valuable interests of the country, as sugar refining. The consumption of coals, pottery, lead, iron, copper, and other staple articles of manufacture, is immense, in proportion to the amount of the capital employed; and all these branches of our domestic industry would be increased, by giving additional encouragement to our sugar refiners.

Under the present system of excluding foreign sugars from our home consumption, they are naturally shipped to other countries, where they are admitted on more favourable terms:

but if this objection be removed, in the manner proposed, and a reduction take place in our port charges, as may be expected after the expiration of the monopolies of our Dock Companies, we shall then obtain a decided preference over every country in Europe. The central situation of Great Britain, for shipping goods to every part of Europe; her ports being open at every season of the year, while those of our continental neighbours are for many months locked up by frost; the solidity of British merchants, which gives security to property; the facility of obtaining advances upon produce, to any amount; the universal resort of foreign purchasers to this great mart; all these circumstances, if we avail ourselves of them by a wise and liberal policy, combine to make this country the emporium of Europe; and it may be confidently hoped that his Majesty's Ministers will secure the unexampled opportunity that now offers, of encouraging the manufacturing interests, and at the same time of extending the navigation, and consequently the naval power, of Great Britain.

It is of the highest importance to form a correct estimate of the comparative value of trade carried on with our own colonies, and with foreign powers. On the former we can depend; on the latter, we cannot. The

legislatures of our colonies are under the controul of the mother country; and no act of theirs is valid, till it has received the sanction of the King of Great Britain. With foreign powers we have no such security. They may alter their systems of policy, form new and different alliances, or combine against that country which they have contributed to aggrandize. All these changes are in the course of human events; and we have not yet forgotten the prohibitory decrees of Buonaparte, the continental system of Europe, nor the non-intercourse and non-importation acts of America. If we trust altogether to foreign trade for the maintenance of our naval power, we shall be sure to lose it when we want it most: for whenever a war takes place, the cheaper rate at which neutrals can navigate, in point of freight and insurance, will throw all the carrying trade into their hands; and our seamen will leave us, to find employment elsewhere, at the moment when our greatness, and even our existence as a nation, may depend upon their services. These considerations make it imperative upon us to protect our colonies, as the only sure means of maintaining our naval supremacy.

Our connexion with India is still less to be depended upon, than that with any foreign power. No higher authority, on matters of

East Indian policy, can be quoted than the late Mr. Warren Hastings; and he declared "that "we hold our empire there by a thread, which "the breath of public opinion may break in a "moment." We have raised and disciplined an army among them, of one hundred and fifty thousand native troops. We have established naval arsenals there, and taught them the art of building ships of war. We have enlightened their minds by the diffusion of knowledge, and knowledge is power. After having thus furnished them with all the materials of independence, would it not be absurd to suppose that they will never use them; and that with fifty thousand Europeans we can keep one hundred millions of people in subjection? Some future Hyder Ally, or Tippoo Saib, with equal talents and enterprise, but with better fortune than his predecessors, will one day assert the independence of his countrymen, and overthrow that unhallowed empire, the foundations of which were laid, in British ambition, perfidy, and rapacity.

Whenever colonies or dependencies become too great for the mother country, they as naturally and regularly throw off their dependence, as children do that of their parents, when they grow up to man's estate; and colonies therefore ought to be proportioned to the mother country, both in extent and population. Great Britain

violated this rule in her North American colonies; and she lost them. She has violated it still more in India, and therefore cannot retain it long; and the examples of South America and the Brazils, which are both cases in point, ought to make her sensible of her danger.

Under these circumstances, to trust to India for our carrying trade, which is the foundation of our naval power, would be infatuation. Were we to do this, instead of India being a dependency of Great Britain, Great Britain would become dependent upon India; for on the possession of India her very existence would be staked. But she may safely suffer her carrying trade to depend upon her West Indian colonies, a cluster of small islands, easily defended by a naval force, and the population of which is too inconsiderable, to admit the remotest apprehension of their ever endeavouring to render themselves independent.

The very question we are now agitating, was discussed last year in the French Chamber of Deputies—Whether they should support their West Indian colonies, which, like our own, were in great distress, or leave them to their fate, and act upon those notions of free trade, which are the popular doctrines of the day. The speech of their Minister of Finance on

that occasion was printed, and contains the following passages:—

"The advocates for free trade call upon France to alter her system, in consequence of the change that has taken place in those vast portions of America, which invite the commerce of all Europe, and bid her relieve both herself and her colonies, from the yoke of a double monopoly, which paralyzes instead of animating their industry. The same prosperity that free trade has given to the Havannah, will be extended to Martinique and Guadaloupe. France will introduce, amongst numerous nations, a taste for her manufactures, but which they never can purchase, if she shuts out their sugars from her market. France must import sugar: let her then purchase it where it can be procured at the cheapest possible rate. The advocates for the colonial system insist on the advantage of employing 300 sail of French ships, in bringing produce which the wants of France require, but which her soil cannot produce, from French colonies, rather than from foreign countries. The colonies are paid for them in French manufactures; or the difference is expended in France, by planters who reside with their families in the mother country. That France is secure of these advantages, because she regulates the legislation of her colonies; but can have no such security in her intercourse with foreigners.

In commenting upon these opposite doctrines, the Minister observes, "Laws are certainly not immutable; but they should even be modified, and much more revoked, with great caution. The question here is, whe-

ther we shall subvert an existing legislation, as ancient as our colonies, which has been established by all the maritime powers of Europe, and which many yet maintain, to introduce one of a nature altogether contrary. We are aware that circumstances may require such innovations; but it is the duty of Government, rather to check than to run before public opinion. The existing system of legislation has the right of possession in its favour; and a better title must be produced, before that right be taken away. The advocates for free trade do not wish that France should renounce her colonies; they know too well, that commercial profits are not the sole consideration attached to colonial possessions. Will they show us how our colonies can remain French, if the market of France is not secured for the sale of their produce? We cannot believe that giving a free access to foreign sugars, would lead to a larger exportation of French manufactures, when we find that the Havannah and the Brazils only take back one half, and India one fifth of the value of the produce which we receive from them; so that by encouraging a larger import of their sugars, we should only have a larger balance to pay them in dollars. These considerations have determined us to propose an additional tax upon foreign sugars, particularly on those of India."

The following are extracts from the speech of Monsieur de Bourienne, Minister of State, on the same subject:

" We will not ask if it is wise to risk the
" loss of what we possess, by giving ourselves up,
" (as is the fashion of the day,) to dangerous
" innovations and chimerical experiments. If we

"ought not to be on our guard against those "apostles of independence—those speculators on "the fate of nations, who preach the destruction of "all that time has consecrated, and the adoption "of theories, suppositions, and dreams—if we "ought to overthrow every thing, because they say "all the world is in a state of revolution—if we "ought to sacrifice an established and useful "commerce to rash essays with unknown and dis-"tant countries; or if we ought to give ourselves "up to the seducing speculations of modern phi-"lanthropy, without maturely weighing the conse-"quences of these doctrines? Happily, we are "relieved from these discussions; we possess "colonies, and the Chamber has voted the neces-"sary expense of their maintenance. We have, "therefore, to consider the relation in which they "stand to us and we to them, and to see whether, "under present circumstances, so far from sepa-"rating our reciprocal interests, we ought not to "unite them still more closely. We shall then pro-"ceed to enquire, whether the colonies stand in "need of relief; whether we ought to give them "relief; and in what manner that relief can best "be given. As to the first point, the Director "General has declared in his report, that the "planters actually sustain a loss on every cwt. of "sugar. We are aware that complaints are fre-"quently accompanied with exaggeration; but the "unanimity of those of the planters, the facts and

"statements on which they are founded, most of "which stand uncontradicted, lead us to confide in "their correctness. If, as is confirmed, sugar at "70 francs the cwt. only gives the planter three per "cent. on his capital, the very existence of the "colonies is threatened; and we can no longer "doubt the necessity of giving them relief. When "the greatest part of every thing they consume is "taken from us—when every thing they produce "is sent to us—can we reject their claims? We "must either renounce our colonies or relieve "them. They are our countrymen, we owe them "assistance and protection. If France wishes to "have colonies, she must wish them to prosper; "she cannot wish to keep them and devote them "to ruin. Let us take care not to wait till the "patient dies, before we think of administering him "relief It is our interest to promote the prospe-"rity of our colonies, because their prosperity "is intimately connected with that of the com-"merce, the manufactures, and the agriculture "of the mother country." The result of this discussion was the imposition of such an additional duty on foreign sugar, as would prevent its coming into competition with colonial sugar, in the home consumption of France, whenever the price did not give a fair remuneration to the West Indian planter; and, on this principle, the home consumption duty on sugar

from India was increased, from 24 livres 75 cents. to 49 livres 50 cents. per cwt.

The British colonies have much stronger claims to the protection of the mother country than those of France, because their present distress originates in the measures of Government. At the close of the late war, Government insisted upon the cession of several additional West Indian colonies, and thus occasioned that surplus import of sugar above the consumption of the mother country, under the consequences of which the British West Indian planters are now suffering. Government also by abolishing the slave trade, without waiting so to do in concert with the other powers of Europe, gave a stimulus to the foreign slave trade, and occasioned such an increase in the cultivation of sugar in the foreign colonies, that the supply has exceeded the demand, and this excess has lowered the price all over Europe; for, as has before been stated, the price in Europe regulates the price in Great Britain.

The agricultural and manufacturing interests of Great Britain are both protected. The West Indian planters contribute to that protection, in the enhanced prices of the supplies which they are obliged to purchase; and therefore they have a just claim to protection in their turn. Mr. Prinsep speaks of the "natural monopoly enjoyed by the West

"Indian growers of sugar, in the shorter distance "and less hazardous navigation, in the greater "cheapness of freight and insurance, and in the "certainty of quicker returns;" and contends, it is "upon that, and upon that alone, that the calcula- "tions of the West Indian were built, and ought, "in reason and justice, for ever to have rested."* Both the British agriculturists and manufacturers have this natural monopoly, (if it may be so called,) but have they not obtained other protection, and would they not be ruined without it? In the present distress of the agriculturists, would it be just to devote them to utter ruin, by taking off all restrictions on the importation of foreign corn? Yet this is the counterpart of the measure he proposes towards the West Indians. If this principle be admitted as between East and West Indian Sugar, it cannot be disputed as between Foreign and British corn. Some speculative political economists have, indeed, hazarded such doctrines, but they have met with few supporters. That the consumer should buy every thing where he can buy it cheapest, is just and true, as an abstract position; but not in the artificial state of society in which we are placed. The principles of free trade require to be modified in their exercise, as much as the Navigation Act, which

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* Suggestions on East India Trade, p. 28, 29.

Mr. Prinsep is pleased to term, "the stalking "horse of the commercial system," and "the "imaginary bulwark of our naval power;" but speaking of which, Adam Smith, the great champion of free trade, declares, that "although some of the provisions of this famous Act probably originated in a spirit of national animosity, yet they are all as wise as if they had been dictated by the most deliberate wisdom;" and in a subsequent passage, that "as defence is of more importance than opulence, the Act of Navigation is perhaps, after all, the wisest of all the commercial regulations of England."

Perhaps the utmost perfection to which Government is capable of attaining, and the most flourishing state of human society that can possibly be imagined, is that, in which agriculture is encouraged by manufactures, manufactures by commerce, and commerce by colonies. Great Britain happily enjoys all these advantages, in a greater degree than they were ever possessed by any other nation; and their beneficial results, heightened by that free constitution which gives full scope to the exertions of every individual, have furnished her with those unexampled resources, which have made her at once the arbitress and the benefactress of Europe, the terror and the admiration of the world. Let her then cherish the means by which these great ends have been accomplished, and not

abandon them for new theories and rash speculations. Let her not, in the present case, countenance a project, in which the popular cry of free trade is set up by those, whose real object is to obtain a share in an existing monopoly: the interests of the British manufacturers and consumers are made the pretence for promoting those of the East Indian traders; philanthropy is used as a plea for involving the population both of the East and West Indies in misery and distress; and the adoption of which would lay the axe to the root of that navigation system, which is the basis of the naval supremacy of Great Britain.

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AN APPEAL

IN BEHALF OF THE

NEGRO SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

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AN APPEAL

TO THE

RELIGION, JUSTICE, AND HUMANITY

OF

THE INHABITANTS

OF THE

BRITISH EMPIRE,

IN BEHALF OF THE

NEGRO SLAVES IN THE WEST INDIES.

BY

W^M^ WILBERFORCE, ESQ., M.P.

Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. JEREMIAH.

Do justice, and love mercy. MICAH.

LONDON:

FOR J. HATCHARD AND SON,

187, PICCADILLY.

1823.

AN

APPEAL,

&c. &c.

To all the inhabitants of the British Empire, who value the favour of God, or are alive to the interests or honour of their country — to all who have any respect for justice, or any feelings of humanity, I would solemnly address myself. I call upon them, as they shall hereafter answer, in the great day of account, for the use they shall have made of any power or influence with which Providence may have entrusted them, to employ their best endeavours, by all lawful and constitutional means, to mitigate, and, as soon as it may be safely done, to terminate the Negro Slavery of the British Colonies; a system of the grossest injustice, of the most heathenish irreligion and immorality, of the most unprecedented degradation, and unrelenting cruelty.

At any time, and under any circumstances, from such a heavy load of guilt as this oppression amounts to, it would be our interest no less than our duty to absolve ourselves. But I will not attempt to conceal, that the present embarrassments and dis-

tress of our country,— a distress, indeed, in which the West Indians themselves have largely participated—powerfully enforce on me the urgency of the obligation under which we lie, to commence, without delay, the preparatory measures for putting an end to a national crime of the deepest moral malignity.

The long continuance of this system, like that of its parent the Slave Trade, can only be accounted for by the generally prevailing ignorance of its real nature, and of its great and numerous evils. Some of the abuses which it involves have, indeed, been drawn into notice. But when the public attention has been attracted to this subject, it has been unadvisedly turned to particular instances of cruelty, rather than to the system in general, and to those essential and incurable vices which will invariably exist wherever the power of man over man is unlimited. Even at this day, few of our countrymen, comparatively speaking, are at all apprised of the real condition of the bulk of the Negro Population; and, perhaps, many of our non-resident West Indian proprietors are full as ignorant of it as other men. Often, indeed, the most humane of the number, (many of them are men whose humanity is unquestionable,) are least of all aware of it, from estimating, not unnaturally, the actual state of the case, by the benevolence of their own well-meant, but unavailing directions to their managers in the western hemisphere.

The persuasion, that it is to the public ignorance of the actual evils of West Indian Slavery that we can alone ascribe its having been suffered so long to remain unreformed and almost unnoticed, is strongly confirmed by referring to what passed when the question for abolishing the Slave Trade was seriously debated in 1792. For then, on the general ground merely of the incurable injustice and acknowledged evils of slavery, aggravated, doubtless, by the consideration that it was a slavery forcibly imposed on unoffending men for our advantage, many of the most strenuous and most formidable opponents of the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade charged us with gross inconsistency, in not fairly following up our own arguments, and proposing the gradual extinction also of slavery itself. "If," they argued, "it is contrary, as you maintain, to the soundest principles of justice, no less than to the clearest dictates of humanity, to permit the seizure, and transportation across the Atlantic, of innocent men to labour for our benefit, can it be more just, or less inhuman, to leave the victims of our rapacity to a life of slavery and degradation, as the hopeless lot of themselves and their descendants for ever? If, indeed, it had been true, as was alleged by the African merchants, that the slaves were only the convicts of Africa, condemned after a fair trial, or that they were delivered by the mercy of their British purchasers from becoming the victims of a bloody superstition, or of a relent-

less despotism, or of cruel intestine wars,—in short, if, as was urged in defence of the traffic, the situation of the slaves in Africa was so bad that it was worth while, even on the plainest principles of humanity, to bring them away, and to place them in a Christian community, though at the price of all the sufferings they must undergo during the process of their deliverance, yet even then our detaining them as *slaves* longer than should be necessary for civilizing them, and enabling them to maintain themselves by their own industry, would be indefensible. But when, as we maintained, all these pleas had been proved to be not merely gross falsehoods, but a cruel mockery of the wretched sufferers, how much more strongly were we bound not to desert them so soon as they should be landed in the West Indies; but to provide as early as possible for their deliverance from a bondage which we ourselves declared to have been originally unjust and cruel. But whatever shadow of a plea might have existed for reducing the imported Africans to slavery, surely none could be urged for retaining, in the same hopeless state, their progeny to the latest generation."

Such was, I repeat it, the reasoning of many of our greatest and ablest opponents, as well as of some of our warmest friends. Such more especially was the argument of our most powerful antagonist in the House of Commons; and, on these grounds, he, thirty years ago, proposed, that in less than eight years, which of

course would have expired at the beginning of the present century, not only should the Slave Trade cease, but the extinction of slavery should itself commence. He proposed that from that hour every new-born Negro infant should be free; subject only, when he should attain to puberty, to a species of apprenticeship for a few years, to repay the owner for the expence of maintaining him during the period of infancy and boyhood. Can I here forbear remarking, that if the advocates for immediate abolition could have foreseen that the feelings of the House of Commons, then apparently so warmly excited, and so resolutely fixed on the instant extinction of the Slave Trade, would so soon subside into a long and melancholy apathy; and had they in consequence acceded to these proposals, the slavery of the West Indies would by this time nearly have expired, and we should be now rejoicing in the delightful change which the mass of our Negro Population would have experienced, from a state of ignominious bondage to the condition of a free and happy peasantry.

And by whom was this proposal made? Was it by some hot-headed enthusiast, some speculative votary of the rights of man? No, by the late Lord Melville, then Mr. Dundas, a statesman of many great and rare endowments, of a vigorous intellect, and superior energy of mind; but to whom no one ever imputed an extravagant zeal for speculative rights or modern theories. And let it be taken into account in what

character he suggested this measure. In that which seemed to give a pledge not only for its justice but for its expediency; — that of the partizan and acknowledged patron of the West Indian body; and at the very moment when he was most conversant with all their affairs, and naturally most alive to all their interests. If any emotions of surprise, therefore, should be excited by my present appeal, it should be, that it has been so long delayed, rather than that it is now brought forward; that previously to our commencing our endeavours for the mitigation, and ultimate extinction of slavery, we should have suffered twenty-two long years to elapse, beyond that interval for notice and preparation, which even the advocate of the West Indians himself had voluntarily proposed, as what appeared to him to be at once safe and reasonable.

It is due also to the character of the late Mr. Burke to state, that long before the subject of the Slave Trade had engaged the public attention, his large and sagacious mind, though far from being fully informed of the particulars of the West Indian system, had become sensible of its deeply criminal nature. He had even devised a plan for ameliorating, and by degrees putting an end both to the Slave Trade and to the state of slavery itself in the West Indies. He proposed, by education, and above all, by religious instruction, to prepare the poor degraded slaves for the enjoyment of civil rights; taking them, in the mean time, into the guardianship and superintendence of

officers to be appointed by the British government. It scarcely needs be remarked, in how great a degree Mr. Burke was an enemy to all speculative theories; and his authority will at least absolve those who now undertake the cause of the Negro Slaves, from the imputation of harshly and unwarrantably disturbing a wholesome and legitimate system of civil subordination.

But if such were the just convictions produced in the mind of Mr. Burke, though very imperfectly acquainted with the vices of the West India system — still more, if it was conceded by many of those who opposed the immediate abolition of the Slave Trade, more especially by that politic statesman, Mr. Dundas, that a state of slavery, considered merely as a violation of the natural rights of human beings, being unjust in its origin, must be unwarrantable in its continuance — what would have been the sentiments and feelings produced in all generous and humane minds by our West Indian slavery, had they known the detail of its great and manifold evils?

The importance of proving, that the alleged decrease of the slaves arose from causes which it was in the master's power easily to remove, led the abolitionists of the Slave Trade, in stating the actual vices of the West Indian system, to dwell much, and too exclusively, perhaps, on the slaves being under-fed and overworked, and on the want of due medical care and medical comforts. These evils, which are

indeed very great, must, of course, be aggravated where the planters were in embarrassed circumstances, notoriously the situation of the greater part of the owners of West Indian estates. But, speaking generally, there exists essentially, in the system itself, from various causes, a natural tendency towards the maximum of labour, and the minimum of food and other comforts. That such was the case in general, whatever exceptions there might be in particular instances, was decisively established by the testimony even of West Indian authorities; and it was fatally confirmed by the decrease of the slaves in almost all our settlements. No other satisfactory explanation could be given of this melancholy fact; for it is contrary to universal experience as to the Negro race, not in their own country only, where they are remarkably prolific, but in the case of the domestic slaves, even in our sugar Colonies. The free Negroes and Mulattoes, and also the Maroons *, in the island of Jamaica, the Charaibs† of St. Vincent, and the Negroes of Bencoolen were all known to increase their numbers, though under circumstances far from favourable to population; and, above all, a striking contrast was found in the rapid native in-

* The descendants of the Negro slaves who fled into the woods, when Jamaica was taken by Venables and Vernon, under Oliver Cromwell, and who, about eighty years ago, were settled in separate villages as free Negroes.

† The descendants of the crew of an African ship which was wrecked on the island about a century ago.

crease of the Negro slaves in the United States of America, though situated in a climate far less suited to the Negro constitution than that of the West Indies. There alone, in a climate much the same as that of Africa, it was declared impossible even to keep up their numbers, without continual importations. This fact alone was a strong presumptive proof, and was raised by various concurrent facts and arguments into a positive certainty, that the decrease of the slaves arose in no small degree, not only from an excess of labour, but from the want of a requisite supply of food, and of other necessaries and comforts. The same phenomena, I fear, are still found to exist, and to indicate the continuance of the same causes. For unless I am much misinformed, there is still a progressive decrease by mortality in most of our Colonies; and if in a smaller ratio to their whole population than formerly, it is to be remembered that the enormous loss, in the seasoning of newly imported Africans, now no longer aggravates the sad account.

But though the evils which have been already enumerated are of no small amount, in estimating the physical sufferings of human beings, especially of the lower rank, yet, to a Christian eye, they shrink almost into insignificance when compared with the moral evils that remain behind—with that, above all, which runs through the whole of the various cruel circumstances of the Negro slave's condition,

and is at once the effect of his wrongs and sufferings, their bitter aggravation, and the pretext for their continuance,—his extreme degradation in the intellectual and moral scale of being, and in the estimation of his white oppressors.

The proofs of the extreme degradation of the slaves, in the latter sense, are innumerable; and, indeed, it must be confessed, that in the minds of Europeans in general, more especially in vulgar minds, whether vulgar from the want of education, or morally vulgar, (a more inwrought and less curable vulgarity,) the personal peculiarities of the Negro race could scarcely fail, by diminishing sympathy, to produce impressions, not merely of contempt, but even of disgust and aversion. But how strongly are these impressions sure to be confirmed and augmented, when to all the effects of bodily distinctions are superadded all those arising from the want of civilization and knowledge, and still more, all the hateful vices that slavery never fails to engender or to aggravate. Such, in truth, must naturally be the effect of these powerful causes, that even the most ingeniously constructed system which humanity and policy combined could have devised, would in vain have endeavoured to counteract them: how much more powerfully then must they operate, especially in low and uneducated minds, when the whole system abounds with institutions and practices

which tend to confirm and strengthen their efficiency, and to give to a contemptuous aversion for the Negro race, the sanction of manners and of law.

It were well if the consequences of these impressions were only to be discovered among the inferior ranks of the privileged class, or only to be found in the opinions and conduct of individuals. But in the earlier laws of our colonies they are expressed in the language of insult, and in characters of blood. And too many of these laws still remain unrepealed, to permit the belief that the same odious spirit of legislation no longer exists, or to relieve the injured objects of them from their degrading influence. The slaves were systematically depressed below the level of human beings.* And though I confess, that it is of less concern to a slave under what laws he lives than what is the character of his master, yet if the laws had extended to them favour and protection instead of degradation, this would have tended to raise them in the social scale, and operating insensibly on the public

* An act of Barbadoes, (8th Aug. 1688,) prescribing the mode of trial for slaves, recites, that "they being brutish slaves, deserve not, for the baseness of their condition, to be tried by the legal trial of twelve men of their peers, &c." Another clause of the same act, speaks of the "barbarous, wild, and savage natures of the same Negroes and other slaves," being such as renders them wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws, practices, and customs of other nations." Other instances of a like spirit might be cited in the acts of other colonies.

mind, might, by degrees, have softened the extreme rigour of their bondage. Such, however, had been the contrary effects of an opposite process, on the estimation of the Negro race, before the ever-to-be-honored Granville Sharpe, and his followers, had begun to vindicate their claim to the character and privileges of human nature, that a writer of the highest authority on all West India subjects, Mr. Long, in his celebrated History of Jamaica, though pointing out some of the particulars of their ill treatment, scrupled not to state it as his opinion, that in the gradations of being, Negroes were little elevated above the oran outang, "that type of man." Nor was this an unguarded or a hastily thrown out assertion. He institutes a laborious comparison of the Negro race with that species of baboon; and declares, that "ludicrous as the opinion may seem, he does not think that an oran outang husband would be any dishonor to a Hottentot female." When we find such sentiments as these to have been unblushingly avowed by an author of the highest estimation among the West India colonists, we are prepared for what we find to have been, and, I grieve to say, still continues to be, the practical effects of these opinions.

The first particular of subsisting legal oppression that I shall notice, and which is at once a decisive proof of the degradation of the Negro race, in the eyes of the whites, and a powerful cause of its continuance, is of a deeply rooted cha-

racter, and often productive of the most cruel effects. In the contemplation of law they are not persons, but mere chattels; and as such are liable to be seized and sold by creditors and by executors, in payment of their owner's debts; and this separately from the estates on which they are settled. By the operation of this system, the most meritorious slave who may have accumulated a little peculium, and may be living with his family in some tolerable comfort, who by long and faithful services may have endeared himself to his proprietor or manager,—who, in short, is in circumstances that mitigate greatly the evils of his condition—is liable at once to be torn for ever from his home, his family, and his friends, and to be sent to serve a new master, perhaps in another island, for the rest of his life.

Another particular of their degradation by law, which, in its effects, most perniciously affects their whole civil condition, and of which their inadequate legal protection is a sure and necessary consequence, is their evidence being inadmissible against any free person. The effect of this cannot be stated more clearly or compendiously than in the memorable evidence of a gentleman eminently distinguished for the candour with which he gave to the Slave Trade Committee the result of his long personal experience in the West Indies,—the late Mr. Otley, Chief-justice of St. Vincent's,—himself a planter:—"As the evidence of slaves is never

admitted against white men, the difficulty of legally establishing the facts is so great, that white men are in a manner put beyond the reach of the law." It is due also to the late Sir William Young, long one of the most active opponents of the abolition, to state, that he likewise, when Governor of Tobago, acknowledged, as a radical defect in the administration of justice, that the law of evidence "covered the most guilty European with impunity."

The same concession was made by both houses of the legislature of Grenada, in the earliest inquiries of the Privy Council. The only difficulty, as they stated, that had been found in putting an effectual stop to gross and wanton cruelty towards slaves, was that of bringing home the proof of the fact against the delinquent by satisfactory evidence: those who were capable of the guilt, being in general artful enough to prevent any but slaves being witnesses of the fact. "As the matter stands," they add, "though we hope the instances in this island are at this day not frequent, yet it must be admitted with regret, that the persons prosecuted, and who certainly were guilty, have escaped for want of legal proof."

It is obvious that the same cause must produce the same effect in all our other slave colonies, although there has not been found the same candour in confessing it.

The next evil which I shall specify, for which the extreme degradation of these poor beings,

in the eyes of their masters, can alone account, is the driving system. Not being supposed capable of being governed like other human beings, by the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment, they are subjected to the immediate impulse or present terror of the whip, and are driven at their work like brute animals. Lower than this it is scarely possible for man to be depressed by man. If such treatment does not find him vile and despised, it must infallibly make him so. Let it not however be supposed, that the only evil of this truly odious system is its outraging the moral character of the human species, or its farther degrading the slaves in the eyes of all who are in authority over them, and thereby extinguishing that sympathy which would be their best protection. The whip is itself a dreadful instrument of punishment; and the mode of inflicting that punishment shockingly indecent and degrading. The drivers themselves, commonly, or rather always slaves, are usually the strongest and stoutest of the Negroes; and though they are forbidden to give more than a few lashes at a time, as the immediate chastisement of faults committed at their work, yet the power over the slaves which they thus possess unavoidably invests them with a truly formidable tyranny, the consequences of which, to the unfortunate subjects of it, are often in the highest degree oppressive and pernicious. No one who reflects on the subject can be at a loss to anticipate one odious use which is too

commonly made of this despotism, in extorting, from the fears of the young females who are subject to it, compliances with the licentious desires of the drivers, which they might otherwise have refused from attachment to another, if not from moral feelings and restraints. It is idle and insulting to talk of improving the condition of these poor beings, as rational and moral agents, while they are treated in a manner which precludes self-government, and annihilates all human motives but such as we impose on a maniac, or on a hardened and incorrigible convict.

Another abuse which shews, like the rest, the extreme degradation of the Negro race, and the apathy which it creates in their masters, is the cruel, and, at least in the case of the female sex, highly indecent punishments inflicted in public, and in the face of day, often in the presence of the gang, or of the whole assembled population of an estate. From their low and ignominious condition it doubtless proceeds, that they are in some degree regarded as below the necessity of observing towards others the proper decencies of life, or of having those decencies observed by others towards them.

It is no doubt also chiefly owing to their not being yet raised out of that extreme depth in which they are sunk, so much below the level of the human species, that no attempts have been made to introduce among them the

Christian institution of marriage, that blessed union which the Almighty himself established as a fundamental law, at the creation of man, to be as it were the well-spring of all the charities of life — the source of all domestic comfort and social improvement, — the moral cement of civilized society.

In truth, so far have the masters been from attempting to establish marriage generally among their slaves, that even the idea of its introduction among them never seems to have seriously suggested itself to their minds. In the commencement of the long contest concerning the abolition of the Slave Trade, it was one of a number of questions respecting the treatment of slaves in the West Indies put by the Privy Council, — "What is the practice respecting the marriage of Negro Slaves, and what are the regulations concerning it?" In all instances, and from every colony, the answers returned were such as these: "They do not marry." "They cohabit by mutual consent," &c. "If by marriage is meant a regular contract and union of one man with one woman, enforced by positive institutions, no such practice exists among the slaves, and they are left entirely free in this respect, &c."

Let me not be supposed ignorant of some acts of the West Indian Legislatures, the perusal of which might produce an opposite impression on the uninformed and credulous

as they gravely require all owners, managers, &c. of slaves, under a penalty, to *exhort* their slaves to receive the ceremony of marriage as instituted under the forms of the Christian Religion: they even profess "*to protect the domestic and connubial happiness of slaves.*" But in direct contradiction to the impression that would naturally be produced by these laws, the Privy Council, but a year after their enactment, was informed, in express terms, that in the very island in which these laws had been passed, there was no such thing as marriage, except that sometimes it existed among the Roman Catholic slaves. This neglect of marriage is the more extraordinary, because the owners of slaves are powerfully called upon by self-interest, no less than by religion and humanity, to make the attempt to promote it. With one concurrent voice they have spoken of the licentiousness of the slaves, and of the numerous bad consequences which follow from the promiscuous intercourse so generally prevalent between the sexes. To this cause, indeed, they chiefly ascribed that inability to keep up the numbers of their slaves which they credibly professed to lament most deeply. How strange, then, that the very institution with which the Almighty associated the primeval command, "Increase and multiply," seems not even to have presented itself to their minds. I have scarcely found a solitary instance in which the want of marriage is regretted, or speci-

fied as in any degree instrumental in preventing the natural increase of slaves, which was desired so earnestly. I recollect not a word having been seriously stated on the subject, until long after the charge of neglecting the marriage institution had been strongly urged against the slave owners by the abolitionists. Then, indeed, it was stated in the meliorating act of the Leeward Islands of 1798, that it was unnecessary, and even improper, to enforce the celebration of any religious rites among the slaves, in order to sanctify contracts, the faithful performance of which could be looked for only by a regular improvement in religion, morality, and civilization. To those who know any thing of the public mind in our West Indian colonies, this passage speaks very intelligible language. It plainly intimates the very position I have been laying down, that the slaves are considered as too degraded to be proper subjects for the marriage institution. A striking corroboration of this position was afforded but a few years ago, when a very worthy clergyman, in one of our Leeward Islands, having obtained the master's leave, proposed to solemnize the marriage of a slave according to the forms of the Church of England. The publication of the banns produced an universal ferment in the colony: the case was immediately referred to the highest legal authorities upon the spot; nor was the question, as a point of law, settled, until it had been referred to his Majesty's legal advisers in this country.

I have dwelt the longer, and insisted the more strongly on the universal want of the marriage institution among the slaves, because, among the multiplied abuses of the West Indian system, it appears to me to be one of the most influential in its immoral and degrading effects. It should, however, be remarked, that though the prevalence of promiscuous intercourse between the male and female slaves is nearly universal, yet mutual and exclusive, though rarely permanent attachments between two individuals of different sexes frequently take place; and as the Africans notoriously have warm affections, the regard is often very strong, so long as it continues. On the mother's side also the instincts of nature are too sure not to produce great affection for her children, some degree of which also will often be found in the father. But how far are these precarious connections from producing that growing attachment, that mutual confidence, which spring from an identity of interest, from the common feeling for a common progeny, with all the multiplied emotions of hope and even of fear, of joys and even of sorrows, which bind families together, when mutually attached to each other by the indissoluble bonds of a Christian union? Alas! the injustice with which these poor creatures are treated accompanies them throughout the whole of their progress; and even the cordial drops which a gracious Providence has elsewhere poured into

the cup of poverty and labour, are to them vitiated and embittered.

It must also be observed, that licentiousness thus produced is not confined to the Negroes. The fact is perfectly notorious, that it has been the general policy to employ instead of married managers and overseers, single young men as the immediate superintendents of the gangs; and hence it too naturally follows, that they who, from their being the depositories of the master's authority, ought to be the protectors of the purity of the young females, too often become their corrupters.

It is a farther important truth, pregnant with the most serious consequences, that the extreme degradation which is supposed to render the slaves unfit to form the marriage contract, belongs not merely to their situation as slaves, but to their colour as Negroes. Hence it adheres not only to those who are for ever released from slavery, but to those also who, by having one European parent, might be presumed to be raised highly above the level of the servile race. Such is the incurable infamy inherent in what still belongs to them of African origin, that they are at an almost immeasurable distance in the scale of being below the lowest of the whites.* The free women of colour deem an

* The extreme degradation of the coloured race, as it affects their marriage relations, is strikingly illustrated by a passage in one of the many pamphlets published

illicit connection with a white man more respectable than a legal union with a coloured husband; while the Mulatto males, as Mr. B. Edwards de-

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against the Registry Bill, in 1816, by a gentleman some time resident in Barbadoes. He speaks with real humanity of the free coloured people, and strongly recommends their being invested with civil and political rights. Such is the uncommon enlargement of his mind, that he even suggests a plan, through the medium of a moral union of the sexes among the coloured people in the colonies, for the gradual emancipation of the slaves; yet he very strongly deprecates any attempt to introduce any such connection between them and the white inhabitants: and he owns that the West Indian prejudice is sufficiently implanted in his own mind, to render such a connection not only repugnant to his feelings, but "contrary to his idea of morals, religion, and polity." Observe here, that this West Indian prejudice is only against a *moral* union and connection, for he actually informs us that the *immoral* connection with this degraded class of the female population is almost universal, prevailing, with scarcely an exception, among the married no less than the unmarried men. He states, and it is abundantly confirmed by Mr. Edwards, that prostitution is unhappily now the only portion of the coloured women; and that the white men who form connections with them, purchase them of their owners, and in many instances of their own parents. But against the *moral* union he declares that he would guard, by advising that the laws should be made to attach the *heaviest pains and penalties of a felonious act* upon the parties so intermarrying. The opinion of a single individual, however respectable, would scarcely have sufficient weight to entitle it to so much notice in any general argument concerning the treatment of the Negroes; but it becomes of real importance, when, as in this instance, an advocate for the West Indian cause bears his testimony to the generally prevailing sentiments and practices in one of the largest and most ancient of our West Indian colonies.

clares with great feeling, are unhappily in too low a state of degradation to think of matrimony. Well may he then remark, that their spirits seem to sink under the consciousness of their condition.* Thus a fatal looseness of principle and practice diffuses itself throughout the whole community. A licentious intercourse between the white men and the coloured females was confessed by Mr. Long to be general in his day; and Mr. B. Edwards, whose History was published so recently as 1793, while he expresses himself with great pity for the wretched victims of this dissoluteness, acknowledges that the general morals were then little, if at all improved, in this particular.

Nor let this be deemed a consideration of subordinate importance. A most sagacious observer of human nature, the late Dr. Paley, states, "It is a fact, however it be accounted for," that "the criminal commerce of the sexes corrupts and depraves the mind and moral character more than any single species of vice whatsoever." "These indulgences," he adds, "in low life, are usually the first stage in mens' progress to the most desperate villanies; and in high life, to that lamented dissoluteness of principle which manifests itself in a profligacy of public con-

* Can I forbear adding, that Mr. Edwards states, that to the Negroes, these poor degraded Mulattoes are objects of envy and hatred, for the supposed superiority of their condition? How low then must the former be sunk in the scale of being!

duct, and a contempt of the obligations of religion and moral probity." This cannot be surprising to any considerate mind. The Supreme Ordainer of all things, in his moral administration of the universe, usually renders crime, in the way of natural consequences, productive of punishment; and it surely was to be expected that he would manifest, by some strong judicial sanction, his condemnation of practices which are at war with the marriage institution, — the great expedient for maintaining the moral order and social happiness of mankind.

In my estimate of things, however, and I trust in that of the bulk of my countrymen, though many of the physical evils of our colonial slavery are cruel, and odious, and pernicious, the almost universal destitution of religious and moral instruction among the slaves is the most serious of all the vices of the West Indian system; and had there been no other, this alone would have most powerfully enforced on my conscience the obligation of publicly declaring my decided conviction, that it is the duty of the legislature of this country to interpose for the mitigation and future termination of a state in which the ruin of the moral man, if I may so express myself, has been one of the sad consequences of his bondage.

It cannot be denied, I repeat, that the slaves, more especially the great body of the field Negroes, are practically strangers to the multiplied blessings of the Christian Revelation.

What a consideration is this! A nation, which besides the invaluable benefit of an unequalled degree of true civil liberty, has been favoured with an unprecedented measure of religious light, with its long train of attendant blessings, has been for two centuries detaining in a state of slavery, beyond example rigorous, and in some particulars worse than pagan darkness and depravity, hundreds of thousands of their fellow creatures, originally torn from their native land by fraud and violence. Generation after generation have thus been pining away; and in this same condition of ignorance and degradation they still, for the most part, remain. This I am well aware is an awful charge; but it undeniably is too well founded, and scarcely admits of any exception beyond what has been effected by those excellent, though too commonly traduced and persecuted men, the Christian missionaries. They have done all that it has been possible for them to do; and through the divine blessing they have indeed done much, especially in the towns, and among the household slaves, considering the many and great obstacles with which they have had to contend.

I must not be supposed ignorant that of late years various colonial laws have been passed, professedly with a view to the promoting of religion among the slaves: but they are all, I fear, worse than nullities. In truth, the solicitude which they express for the personal protection, and still more for the moral interests,

of the slaves, contrasted with the apparent forgetfulness of those interests which so generally follows in the same community, might have appeared inexplicable, but for the frank declaration of the Governor of one of the West Indian islands, which stood among the foremost in passing one of these boasted laws for ameliorating the condition of the slaves. That law contained clauses which, with all due solemnity, and with penalties for the non-observance of its injunctions, prescribed the religious instruction of the slaves; and the promoting of the marriage institution among them; and in order "to secure as far as possible the good treatment of the slaves, and to ascertain the cause of their decrease, if any," it required certificates of the slaves' increase and decrease to be annually delivered on oath, under a penalty of *50l.* currency. His Majesty's government, some time after, very meritoriously wishing for information as to the state of the slaves, applied to the governor for some of the intelligence which this act was to provide. To this application the Governor, the late Sir George Prevost, replied as follows: "The act of the legislature, entitled 'An act for the encouragement, protection, and better government of slaves,' appears to have been considered, from the day it was passed until this hour, as a political measure to avert the interference of the mother country in the management of slaves." The same account of the motives by which the legislatures of other West Indian

islands were induced to pass acts for ameliorating the condition of the slaves, was given by several of the witnesses who were examined in the committee of the House of Commons in 1790 and 1791.

In all that I state concerning the religious interests of the slaves, as well as in every other instance, I must be understood to speak only of the *general* practice. There are, I know, resident in this country, individual owners of slaves, and some, as I believe, even in the colonies, who have been sincerely desirous that their slaves should enjoy the blessings of Christianity: though often, I lament to say, where they have desired it, their pious endeavours have been of little or no avail. So hard is it, especially for absent proprietors, to stem the tide of popular feeling and practice, which sets strongly in every colony against the religious instruction of slaves. So hard also, I must add, is it to reconcile the necessary means of such instruction with the harsh duties and harsher discipline to which these poor beings are subjected. The gift even of the rest of the Sabbath is more than the established œconomics of a sugar plantation permit even the most independent planter to confer, while the law tacitly sanctions its being wholly withheld from them.

Generally speaking, throughout the whole of our West Indian islands, the field slaves, or common labourers, instead of being encouraged or even permitted to devote the Sunday to reli-

gious purposes, are employed either in working their provision-grounds for their own and their families' subsistence, or are attending, often carrying heavy loads to, the Sunday markets, which frequently, in Jamaica, are from ten to fifteen miles distant from their abodes.

These abuses confessedly continue to prevail in despite of the urgent remonstrances, for more than the last half century, of members of the colonial body, and these sometimes, like Mr. B. Edwards, the most accredited advocates for the interests and character of the West Indians.

The insensibility of the planters, even to the temporal good effects of Christianity on their slaves, is the more surprising, because, besides their having been powerfully enforced by self-interest, as I have already stated, in restraining a licentious intercourse between the sexes, they were strongly recommended, especially in the great island of Jamaica, by another consideration of a very peculiar nature. The Jamaica planters long imputed the most injurious effects on the health and even the lives of their slaves, to the African practice of Obeah, or witchcraft. The agents for Jamaica declared to the privy council, in 1788, that they "ascribed a very considerable portion of the annual mortality among the Negroes in that island to that fascinating mischief." I know that of late, ashamed of being supposed to have punished witchcraft with such severity, it has been alleged, that the professors of Obeah used to prepare and

administer poison to the subjects of their spells: but any one who will only examine the laws of Jamaica against these practices, or read the evidence of the agents, will see plainly that this was not the view that was taken of the proceedings of the Obeah-men, but that they were considered as impostors, who preyed on their ignorant countrymen by a pretended intercourse with evil spirits, or by some other pretences to supernatural powers. The idea of rooting out any form of pagan superstition by severity of punishment, especially in wholly uninstructed minds, like that of extirpating Christianity by the fire and the faggot, has long been exploded among the well-informed; and it has even been established, that the devilish engine of persecution recoils back on its employers, and disseminates the very principles it would suppress. Surely then it might have been expected, that, if from no other motive, yet that for the purpose of rooting a pagan superstition out of the minds of the slaves, the aid of Christianity would have been called in, as the safest species of knowledge? and it was strange if the Jamaica gentlemen were ignorant of the indubitable fact, that Christianity never failed to chase away these vain terrors of darkness and paganism. No sooner did a Negro become a Christian, than the Obeah-man despaired of bringing him into subjection. And it is well worthy of remark, that when in the outset of our abolition proceedings, His Majesty's Privy Council, among a

number of queries sent out to the different West India islands, concerning the condition of the slaves, had proposed several concerning the nature and effects of this African superstition, of which the Privy Council had heard so much from the agents for Jamaica, the Council and Assembly of the Island of Antigua, in which, through the successful labours of the Moravian and Methodist missionaries, great numbers of the slaves had become Christians, resented, as an imputation on their understandings, the very idea of their being supposed to have considered the practices of the Obeah-men as deserving of any serious attention. Surely then we might have expected that regard for the temporal well-being of the slaves, if not for their highest interests, would have prompted their owners to endeavour to bring them out of their present state of religious darkness into the blessed light of Christianity? But even self-interest itself appears to lose its influence, when it is to be promoted by means of introducing Christianity among the slaves.

If any thing were wanting to add the last finishing tint to the dark colouring of this gloomy picture, it would be afforded by a consideration which still remains behind. However humiliating the statement must be to that legislature which exercises its superintendency over every part of the British Empire; it is nevertheless true, that, low in point of morals as the Africans may have been in their own

country, their descendants, who have never seen the continent of Africa, but who are sprung from those who for several successive generations have been resident in the Christian colonies of Great Britain, are still lower. Nay, they are universally represented as remarkable in those colonies for vices which are directly opposite to the character which has been given of the Africans by several of the most intelligent travellers who have visited the interior of their native country. In proof of this assertion, I refer not to any delineations of the African character by what might be supposed to be partial hands. Let any one peruse the writings of authors who opposed the abolition of the Slave Trade, more especially the Travels of Mr. Parke and M. Golberry, both published since the commencement of the Slave Trade contest. It is not unworthy of remark, that many of the Africans in their own country are raised, by not being altogether illiterate, far above the low level to which the entire want of all education depresses the field slaves in the West Indies. It is stated by Mr. Parke, who took his passage from Africa to the West Indies in a slave-ship, that of one hundred and thirty slaves which the vessel conveyed, about twenty-five of them, who, as he supposes, had been of free condition, could most of them write a little Arabic. The want, however, of this measure of literature is of small account: but compare the moral nature of the Africans, while yet living in their

native land, and in all the darkness and abominations of paganism, with the character universally given of the same Africans in our West Indian colonies. He will find that the Negroes, who while yet in Africa were represented to be industrious, generous, eminent for truth, seldom chargeable with licentiousness, distinguished for their domestic affections, and capable at times of acts of heroic magnanimity, are described as being in the West Indies the very opposite in all particulars; selfish, indolent, deceitful, ungrateful,—and above all, in whatever respects the intercourse between the sexes, incurably licentious.

And now, without a farther or more particular delineation of the slavery of the British colonies, what a system do we behold!! Is it too much to affirm, that there never was, certainly never before in a Christian country, a mass of such aggravated enormities?

That such a system should so long have been suffered to exist in any part of the British Empire will appear, to our posterity, almost incredible. It had, indeed, been less surprising, if its seat had been in regions, like those of Hindostan, for instance, where a vast population had come into our hands in all the full-blown enormity of heathen institutions; where the bloody superstitions, and the unnatural cruelties and immoralities of paganism, had established themselves in entire authority, and had produced their natural effects in the depravity and moral degradation of the spe-

cies; though even in such a case as that, our excuse would hold good no longer than for the period which might be necessary for reforming the native abuses by those mild and reasonable means which alone are acknowledged to be just in principle, or practically effectual to their purpose. But that in communities formed from their very origin by a Christian people, and in colonies containing no Pagan inhabitants but those whom we ourselves have compulsorily brought into it,—inhabitants too, who, from all the circumstances of their case, had the strongest possible claims on us, both for the reparation of their wrongs, and the relief of their miseries,—such a system should have been continued for two centuries, and by a people who may, nevertheless, I trust, be affirmed to be the most moral and humane of nations, is one of those anomalies which, if it does not stagger the belief, will, at least, excite the astonishment of future ages.

But it may naturally and perhaps not unfairly be asked of the abolitionists—You professed to be well acquainted with the state of things in the West Indies when you moved for the abolition of the Slave Trade—if you then thought the system to be at all such as you now state it to be, how could you rest contented with restricting your efforts to the abolition of the traffic in slaves, contrary, as you confess, to the wishes and even the endeavours of many friends of your great cause, and of some even of its enemies?

It is true, that the evils of the West Indian

system had not passed unnoticed; and we would gladly have brought forward a plan for ameliorating the condition of the Negroes, but that the effort was beyond our strength. We found the adversaries of the abolition far too numerous and too powerful for us, and we were perfectly sure that we should greatly add to their number and vehemence by striking also at the system of slavery. But farther I will frankly confess, that we greatly deceived ourselves by expecting much more benefit to the plantation Negroes from the abolition of the Slave Trade than has actually resulted from that measure. We always relied much on its efficiency in preparing the way for a general emancipation of the slaves: for let it be remembered, that, from the very first, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Grey, and all the rest of the earliest abolitionists, declared that the extinction of slavery was our great and ultimate object; and we trusted, that by compelling the planters to depend wholly on native increase for the supply of their gangs, they would be forced to improve the condition of their slaves, to increase their food, to lessen their labour, to introduce task-work, to abolish the driving system, together with degrading and indecent punishments, to attach the slaves to the soil, and, with proper qualifications, to admit their testimony as witnesses — a necessary step to all protection by law; above all, to attend to their religious and moral improvement, and to one of the grand

peculiarities of Christianity, the marriage institution. By the salutary operation of these various improvements, the slaves would have become qualified for the enjoyment of liberty; and preparation would have been made for that happy day, when the yoke should be taken off for ever, when the blessed transmutation should take place of a degraded slave population into a free and industrious peasantry.*

* It is the more necessary to state that the views of the abolitionists were always directed towards the extinction of slavery, after preparing the black population for the enjoyment of it; because, from some statements which were made in the Register-bill controversy, we may expect that our opponents will renew the charge they then brought against us, that we had originally disclaimed all views of emancipating the slaves actually in the islands, confining ourselves exclusively to the prohibition of all future importations of Negroes. Our explanation is clear and short. Our opponents imputed to us that our real intention was, *immediately*, to emancipate the slave population of the Colonies: they were aware that there were many who felt themselves bound by the most urgent principles of justice and humanity at once to put an end to a system of crimes, which was so falsely called a trade in Negroes, who yet would oppose all endeavours to emancipate the slaves without those previous and preparatory measures that would be requisite for enabling them to render the acquisition of liberty either safe for their owners or beneficial to themselves. We, in consequence, declared, that although we certainly did look forward ultimately to the emancipation of the slaves, yet that the object we were then pursuing was only the abolition of the Slave Trade, of which it was one grand recommendation, that by stopping the further influx of uncivilised Africans, and by rendering the planters sensible that they must in future depend on the native increase for

We were too sanguine in our hopes as to the effects of the abolition in our colonies; we judged too favourably of human nature; we thought too well of the colonial assemblies; we did not allow weight enough to the effects of rooted prejudice and inveterate habits — to absenteeship, a vice which, taken in its whole extent, is perhaps one of the most injurious of the whole system; to the distressed finances of the planters; and, above all, to the effects of the extreme degradation of the Negro slaves, and to the long and entire neglect of Christianity among them, with all its attendant blessings.

True it is, that from the want of effectual Register acts, the experiment has not been fairly tried; as the abolition is in consequence known to be a law that may easily be evaded. For,

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keeping up their slave population, it would tend powerfully to prepare the way for the great and happy change of slave into free labourers. Our adversaries, however, continuing artfully to confound abolition and emancipation, our efforts were often employed in distinguishing between the two, and in distinctly and fully explaining our real meaning; nor am I conscious of any occasion, on which we disclaimed the intention of emancipation, without accompanying the disclaimer with the clear explanation that it was immediate, not ultimate emancipation, which we disclaimed. Not to mention declarations without number of our real meaning, various illustrations might be referred to of the chief speakers in those debates, which would prove that the emancipation of the slaves was the ultimate, though not the immediate object, of all those who took the lead as advocates for the abolition of the Slave Trade.

let it be ever borne in mind, that the ground of our persuasion was, that the absolute prohibition of all future importation of slaves into the colonies, provided means were adopted for insuring its permanent execution, would exercise a sort of moral compulsion over the minds of the planters, and even of their managers and overseers, and induce them, for the necessary end of maintaining the black population, to adopt effectual measures for reforming the principal abuses of the system: but it is manifest, that such compulsion could not arise from a law which they had power to elude at pleasure. I am willing, however, for my own part, to admit that this foundation-stone of our hopes may have rested on sandy ground; for what has since passed has proved to me how little prudence and foresight can effect in opposition to the stubborn prejudices, and strong passions, and inveterate habits that prevail in our West Indian assemblies. With one single exception in favour of the free coloured people in Jamaica, the admission of their evidence, which, however, only placed them in the situation which they had always before occupied in most of our other islands, I know not any vice of the system that has been rooted out, any material improvement that has been adopted. Not only the abuses which had been pointed out by the abolitionists are still existing in all their original force, but some of those reforms which had been urged on the colonial legisla-

tures by their warmest friends, and most approved advocates, remain to this hour unadopted in every island. Mr. B. Edwards, for instance, near thirty years ago, in his History of the West Indies, recommended the introduction, wherever practicable, of the system of task-work, accompanied of course with a law for securing to the slave his little peculium. He recommended also, though with less confidence, a plan for instituting among the slaves a sort of juries for the trial of petty offences—a measure which, he added, he had heard had been tried successfully in two instances in Jamaica, and which a humane proprietor of Barbadoes, the late Mr. Steele, introduced, and for many years maintained with great advantage on his own estate. Another measure, which, as he truly stated, was of less doubtful efficacy, was strongly enforced by him; namely, the duty of rendering the Sabbath a day of rest and religious improvement, by suppressing the Sunday markets, which he justly declared to be a disgrace to a Christian country. But above all the rest, he pressed the reform of what he represented the greatest of all the Negro's grievances, and which he afterwards brought to the notice of the British Parliament. This was the liability of the slaves to be sold by creditors, under executions for the payment of debts. This grievance he alleged to be upheld and confirmed, though not originally created, by a British Act of Parliament, 5 Geo. 2. cap. 7., which, he contended, it was necessary to repeal, in order to

enable the colonial legislatures to do away with the practice altogether. He declared it to be a grievance, remorseless and tyrannical in its principle, and dreadful in its effects; a grievance too, which it could not be urged occurred but seldom. "Unhappily," he added, "it occurs every day; and, under the present system, will continue to occur, so long as men shall continue to be unfortunate. Let this statute then," said he, "be totally repealed. *Let the Negroes be attached to the land*, and sold with it." He even arraigned the abolitionists as eminently criminal for not having solicited the repeal of that "execrable statute," as he termed it, though of its operation and even existence nineteen-twentieths of them perhaps were utterly ignorant. With no little pomp and circumstance did this gentleman introduce and carry through Parliament, an act for repealing the statute complained of; and he had the cordial and unanimous support of all the abolitionists. This measure seemed to pledge the assemblies in the most effectual manner to follow up the principle of the repealing act, by repealing also their own laws which supported, and had, in fact, first introduced the cruel practice: and this experiment on their humanity was tried, it must be admitted, under the most favourable circumstances; for Mr. B. Edwards's proposal of attaching the slaves to the land was strongly recommended to their adoption by the Duke of Portland, then secretary of state for the colonies, a nobleman well known to be

peculiarly acceptable to them, in a circular letter to the Governor. Yet of all our colonial legislatures, then thirteen in number, not one has in any degree reformed the grievance in question, much less, followed the suggestion of Mr. Edwards, by attaching the slaves to the plantations. The House of Assembly of Jamaica contemptuously declined giving any answer at all to the Governor's message upon the subject; and the slaves are still everywhere subject to that "*remorseless and tyrannical grievance,*" which above three-and-twenty years ago was so feelingly denounced to, and condemned by, the British Parliament.

Other mitigations of slavery have, as long been recommended to the assemblies, even by their own most respected advocates in this country; but not one has been effectually adopted. The laws which the various legislatures have passed for such purposes, still precisely answer the description given by Mr. Burke in his letter to Mr. Secretary Dundas, in 1792, of such colonial statutes: "I have seen," said he, after the passing of the celebrated consolidated Slave Laws of Jamaica, and of other islands, "I have seen what has been done by the West Indian Assemblies. It is arrant trifling; — they have done little, and what they have done is *good for nothing, for it is totally destitute of an executory principle.*" Taking into consideration all the circumstances that accompanied and followed the enactment

of those laws, it is difficult to suppose that they were not passed on the views stated in the memorable letter before noticed of the Governor of Dominica, and which, indeed, seemed to have been virtually recommended to them in the year 1797 by the West Indian committee; as the objects suggested to them by that body were "the joint purposes of opposing the plan of the abolitionists*," (*i. e.* the abolition of the Slave Trade,) "and establishing the character of the West Indian body." One grand class of such laws, passed, indeed, at a considerably later period,—the acts of the colonial assemblies for registering the slaves, with a view to prevent illicit importation,—are shown, by a report of the African Institution, to be wholly and manifestly ineffectual to their purpose. But the case, in several of the islands, is still more opprobrious; new laws have been passed, which so far from even exhibiting any show of a wish to alleviate the pressure of the yoke of slavery, have rendered it more dreadfully galling, and less tolerable, because even more than before hopeless. The individual manumission of slaves by their masters, which has been provided for, with so much sound policy as well as true humanity, by the laws in force in the Spanish colonies, and has there been found productive of such happy effects; those individual manumissions which,

* It is, in the original, "the plan of Mr. Wilberforce." See papers of 1804. St. Vincent's, I. 7.

while slavery prevailed here, the English law assiduously encouraged and promoted, have been cruelly restrained. They were long since, in one or two of our islands, subjected to discouraging regulations*; but were, in most of our colonies, wholly unrestrained till within the last thirty years. Can it be conceived possible, that even since the mitigation of slavery was recommended from the throne, in consequence of addresses from Parliament, several of the colonial legislatures have for the first time imposed, and others have greatly augmented, the fines to be paid into their treasuries on the enfranchising of slaves, so that in some colonies they amount nearly to an entire prohibition? Such acts may be truly said to be more unjust in their principle, and more cruel and dangerous in their effects, than almost any other part of the dreadful code of West Indian legislation. The laws of England, ever favourable to manumissions, progressively rooted out the curse of slavery from our native land; but it is the opposite and opprobrious tendency of these colonial laws to make the barbarous institution perpetual.

I press these topics the more earnestly, because there has prevailed among many of our statesmen, of late years, a most unwarrantable and pernicious disposition to leave all that concerns the well-being of the slaves to the colonial legislatures. Surely this is a course manifestly contrary to the clearest obligations of duty. The very relation in which the Negro slaves and

the members of the colonial assemblies, which consist wholly of their masters, stand towards each other, is of itself a decisive reason why the imperial legislature ought to consider itself bound to exercise the office of an umpire, or rather of a judge between them, as constituting two parties of conflicting interests and feelings. And this, let it be remembered, not merely because, knowing the frailty of our common nature, and its disposition to abuse absolute power, we ought not to deliver the weaker party altogether into the power of the stronger; but because in the present instance there are peculiar objections of great force, some of which have been already noticed. In truth, West Indians must be exempt from the ordinary frailties of human nature, if, living continually with those wretched beings, and witnessing their extreme degradation and consequent depravity, they could entertain *for the* Negroes, in an unimpaired degree, that equitable consideration and that fellow-feeling, which are due from man to man; so as to sympathise properly with them in their sufferings and wrongs, or form a just estimate of their claims to personal rights and moral improvement.

The fact is, that though the old prejudice, that the Negroes are creatures of an inferior nature, is no longer maintained in terms, there is yet too much reason to fear that a latent impression arising from it still continues practically to operate in the colonies, and to in-

fluence the minds of those who have the government of the slaves, in estimating their physical claims, and still more those of their moral nature. The colonists, indeed, and the abolitionists, would differ as to facts, in speaking of the sufficiency of the slave's supply of food, and of his treatment in some other particulars. But on what other principle than that of the inferiority of the species, can it be explained, that, in estimating what is due to the Negroes, all consideration of their moral nature has been altogether left out? When it is undeniable that they have no more power of giving their testimony against any white ruffian by whom they may have been maltreated, than if they were of the brute creation; that they are worked like cattle under the whip; that they are strangers to the institution of marriage, and to all the blessed truths of Christianity; how, but from their supposed inferiority of nature, could we nevertheless be assured by the colonial legislatures, with the most unhesitating confidence, that whatever defects there might formerly have been in their treatment, they are now as well used *as can reasonably be desired?* If such be indeed their opinion, whether that opinion proceeds from the views here intimated or not, it would still suffice to show the criminality, of our committing to them the destiny of the slaves. For let it be observed, there is not in this instance any difference as to the facts of the case; nor do the colonists affirm what we deny, as to the moral

degradation of the slaves. Both parties, for instance, agree that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, and Pagan darkness, are nearly universal among them; and yet the colonists contend that the slaves are as well treated and governed as they need to be. Can then the members of the British Parliament conscientiously devolve the duty of establishing such religious and moral reforms, as I trust it must be the universal wish of every member of the empire to introduce among the Negroes, upon those, who, to say nothing of the extremity of personal degradation, consider marriage and Christianity as unworthy of their regard, in estimating the condition of their fellow creatures?

Indeed, the West Indians, in the warmth of argument, have gone still farther, and have even distinctly told us, again and again, and I am shocked to say that some of their partizans in this country have re-echoed the assertion, that these poor degraded beings, the Negro slaves, are as well or even better off than our British peasantry,—a proposition so monstrous, that nothing can possibly exhibit in a stronger light the extreme force of the prejudices which must exist in the minds of its assertors. A Briton to compare the state of a West Indian slave with that of an English freeman, and to give the former the preference! It is to imply an utter insensibility of the native feelings and moral dignity of man, no less than of the rights of Englishmen!! I will not condescend to argue this ques-

tion, as I might, on the ground of comparative feeding and clothing, and lodging, and medical attendance. Are these the only claims? are these the chief privileges of a rational and immortal being? Is the consciousness of personal independence nothing? are self-possession and self-government nothing? Is it of no account that our persons are inviolate by any private authority, and that the whip is placed only in the hands of the public executioner; Is it of no value that we have the power of pursuing the occupation and the habits of life which we prefer; that we have the prospect, or at least the hope, of improving our condition, and of rising, as we have seen others rise, from poverty and obscurity to comfort, and opulence, and distinction? Again, are all the charities of the heart, which arise out of the domestic relations, to be considered as nothing; and, I may add, all their security too among men who are free agents, and not vendible chattels, liable continually to be torn from their dearest connections, and sent into a perpetual exile? Are husband and wife, parent and child, terms of no meaning? Are willing services, or grateful returns for voluntary kindnesses, nothing? But, above all, is Christianity so little esteemed among us, that we are to account as of no value the hope, "full of immortality," the light of heavenly truth, and all the consolations and supports by which religion cheers the hearts and elevates the principles, and dignifies the conduct of multitudes of our labouring classes in this

free and enlightened country? Is it nothing to be taught that all human distinctions will soon be at an end; that all the labours and sorrows of poverty and hardship will soon exist no more; and to know, on the express authority of Scripture, that the lower classes, instead of being an inferior order in the creation, are even the preferable objects of the love of the Almighty?

But such wretched sophisms as insult the understandings of mankind, are sometimes best answered by an appeal to their feelings. Let me therefore ask, is there, in the whole of the three kingdoms, a parent or a husband so sordid and insensible that any sum, which the richest West Indian proprietor could offer him, would be deemed a compensation for his suffering his wife or his daughter to be subjected to the brutal outrage of the cart-whip—to the savage lust of the driver — to the indecent, and degrading, and merciless punishment of a West Indian whipping? If there were one so dead, I say not to every liberal, but to every natural feeling, as that money could purchase of him such concessions, such a wretch, and he alone, would be capable of the farther sacrifices necessary for degrading an English peasant to the condition of a West Indian slave. He might consent to sell the liberty of his own children, and to barter away even the blessings conferred on himself by that religion which declares to him that his master, no less than himself, has a Master in heaven — a common Creator, who is no re-

specter of persons, and in whose presence he may weekly stand on the same spiritual level with his superiors in rank, to be reminded of their common origin, common responsibility, and common day of final and irreversible account.

But I will push no farther a comparison which it is painful and humiliating to contemplate: let it however be remembered, that it is to those who have professed insensibility to this odious contrast that the destiny of the poor slaves would be committed, were we to leave them to the disposal of the colonial legislatures.

There is another consideration, which, on a moment's reflection, will appear perhaps not less decisive. The advocates for the Negroes declare without reserve, as from the first they declared, that the reforms they wish to introduce are intended, by preparing the slaves for the possession of self-government, for the purpose of gradually and safely doing away slavery altogether, and transmuting the wretched Africans into the condition of free British labourers. Now, let it never be forgotten, the West Indian legislatures, and almost all the colonists, with one concurrent voice, declare that the emancipation of the slaves, within any period except that to which an antediluvian might have looked forward, would be their utter ruin. Shall we then devolve the duty of introducing into the West Indian system the moral reforms which, once effected, would render it

manifestly impossible to detain the slave in his present degrading bondage, on those who plainly tell us that his being delivered from it would be productive of their utter ruin? Can *they* be expected to labour fairly in producing reforms, the ultimate object of which they do not merely regard as superfluous, but dread as most pernicious and destructive? Should we act thus in any parallel instance? All comparisons on this subject are weak; but suppose that, through a criminal inadvertency, we had administered some poisonous substance to a fellow creature, who had a special claim to our protection and kindness; that we had deeply injured his constitution, and that the comfort of all his future life, or probably his life itself, should depend on his being immediately put under a course of the ablest medical treatment. Supposing also—surely in such a case no unnatural supposition—that we felt the deepest distress of mind from the consciousness of the wrong we had done to this poor sufferer, and were prompted, alike by conscience and feeling, to use our utmost possible endeavours to restore him to ease and health—should we be satisfied with committing this patient into the hands of some medical practitioner, whom otherwise we might have been disposed to employ, if he were to state to us, contrary to our plain knowledge of the fact, "The man has taken no poison—his health has sustained no injury—he is already as sound and well as he needs to be, and requires no farther medical care." But we

may put the case still more strongly:—Supposing there were a declared opposition of interest between the patient and this same medical practitioner, and that the latter conceived that the recovery of the patient would prove fatal to his own future fortunes—could we then, as honest and rational men, commit the case to his uncontrouled management alone? If we did, who would not pronounce our alleged sorrow for the injury we had done, and our earnest wish to repair it, to be no better than hypocritical affectation.

Let me not be conceived to dwell on this topic with unreasonable pertinacity. In truth, practically speaking, the fate of the Negro slaves, so far at least as a safe and peaceable reform of the system is in question, hinges entirely on this point. Of this the colonists themselves are well aware; and, wise in their generation, they therefore take their principal stand on the ground of objecting to the interference of the imperial legislature for the protection of the slaves, though this is an objection which did not even so much as present itself to the inquiring mind of Mr. Burke, when in the year 1780 he drew up his plan for the reformation of the Negro system; or in 1792, when he communicated it to his majesty's ministers. For we cannot suppose that had it suggested itself to his mind, as an obstacle to the introduction of his plan, he would have left it quite unnoticed. Few, if any, are bold enough to claim for the assemblies an ex-

clusive jurisdiction on these subjects as their right. They only tell us of the *delicacy* of Parliamentary interference in such matters of internal legislation. This delicacy, however, was not felt, I repeat it, by Mr. Burke. As little was it felt by Mr. Dundas, the avowed advocate of the Colonies, when, in 1792, he brought forward his plan of emancipation. We may therefore certainly conclude, that no such objection occurred to that experienced statesman, who, as a minister of the crown, was called on for great circumspection, especially in regard to measures proposed by himself; but who, like Mr. Burke, never condescended to notice any such objection to the plan which he laid before the House of Commons.

To persons not conversant with the state of things in the West Indies, it may appear plausible to say, that the assemblies and their constituents are the most competent, in point of information, to the important work of reform; and many are apt, perhaps, to be misled by a supposed analogy between the relations of master and slave in the West Indies, and those of the owner or occupier of land and his labourers in this country. But there is in fact no just analogy between them; nor are the colonial legislatures composed of such men as the West Indian proprietors whom we are accustomed to see in this country; many of whom are personally strangers to their estates, and to the crimes and miseries of the system by which they

are governed. Nor is the moral state of the whites resident in the West Indies, less different from that of the corresponding classes of our countrymen in their native land. It has been most truly remarked by Mr. Brougham, in his able work on colonial policy, that the agriculture of the West Indies has always been of a nature nearly allied to commercial adventure; and the spirit of adventure, as he justly observes, is, in such circumstances, unfavourable to morals and to manners. Mr. B. means of course, as the context shews, not such commercial enterprise as belongs to the mercantile character in its proper element, but that of which man is the subject, in the gaming agricultural speculations of a sugar colony. He means, that it gives none of the proper virtues of the industrious European merchant, and still less of those steady local attachments which belong to the landed proprietor here, and make him the natural patron of the labouring class, settled on his hereditary property. "The object of a West India resident speculator," he observes, "is not to live, but to gain; not to enjoy, but to save; not to subsist in the colonies, but to prepare for shining in the mother country." This I am well aware will be an offensive, as I am sure it is to me a painful topic; but it ought not on that account to be left out of view; and any one who wishes to form a just notion of the effects of these causes will find them stated in the work above-mentioned, with the accustomed force of that very

powerful writer.* Even in the French islands, where there have been always far more resident proprietors than in our own, the same causes are stated by Mr. Malonet, himself a colonist, to operate powerfully, and to produce in a considerable degree similar bad effects.

And is it to societies consisting of such elements as these, that a humane and enlightened legislature can conscientiously delegate its duties

* Mr. Brougham must be understood to intend to state only the tendency and general effects of the causes he has been enumerating. When individuals manifest that they are exceptions to the rule, it is so much the more to their honour. "A colony," he remarks, "composed of such adventurers, is peopled by a race of men all hastening to grow rich, and eager to acquire wealth for the gratification of avarice or voluptuousness." "The continuance of the members in this society is as short as possible." "What," they may be supposed to say to themselves, "what, though our conduct is incorrect, and our manners dissolute? We shall accommodate them to those of our European countrymen when we return." "Such I fear is the natural language of men in those circumstances. But their manners are affected also by other peculiarities in their situation. The want of modest female society, the general case on the plantations remote from the towns, while it brutalizes the mind and manners of men, necessarily deprives them of all the virtuous pleasures of domestic life, and frees them from those restraints which the presence of a family always imposes on the conduct of the most profligate men. The witnesses of the planters' actions are the companions of his debaucheries, or the wretched beings who tremble at his nod, while they minister to the indulgence of his brutal appetite; and impose no more check upon his excesses than if they wanted that faculty of speech which almost alone distinguishes them from the beasts that surround them."

as to religious and moral reforms; reforms too, as has been already shewn, which the colonists not only slight as frivolous, but condemn as ruinous. Let it be further taken into account, that the formation of laws and regulations for the slaves is not left to the uncontrouled sentiments and feelings of the more affluent, and consequently, it may be presumed, more liberal of the resident land-owners. For the colonial house of assembly, which answers to our House of Commons, is chosen by the resident white proprietors at large, and must necessarily be governed in great measure by their general sentiments and feelings. Nor can it be supposed to be uninfluenced by what is here called the popular voice, but which, in the West Indies, is the voice of the white colonists only, and these too of the lower order, among whom the *esprit de corps* is peculiarly strong. These borderers on the despised coloured race are naturally the most hostile to them, and the most tenacious of those complexional privileges which constitute their own social elevation. The voice, therefore, of the populace in the West Indies, or what may be called the cry of the mob, is always adverse to the humane and liberal principles by which the slavery of the blacks should be mitigated, and by which they should be gradually prepared for the enjoyment of freedom.

These considerations are of no trifling moment; and they may be, in some measure, illustrated by some transactions which took place not long ago in the largest, except Jamaica,

and the longest settled of all our colonies, the island of Barbadoes; though there are in that colony more resident proprietors than in any other, in proportion to the whole population. The facts I here allude to may have the more weight, because they are not liable to the objection, which has been sometimes urged against the abolitionists when they have quoted laws and transactions of an old date, that they formed an unfair test of the opinions and feelings of the present generation; for they took place so recently as the latter part of 1804.

It had long been a reproach to Barbadoes, that the murder of a slave by his owner, instead of being a capital crime, as in most of our other West Indian colonies, was, in that colony, punishable only by a fine of 15*l.** Lord Seaforth, the governor, therefore, himself a West Indian proprietor, wishing to wipe off the blot, sent a message, in the common form, to the house of assembly, recommending that an act should be passed to make the murder of a slave a capital

* The murder of another man's slave was punished more severely, the penalty being then 25*l.* to be paid to the public treasury, and double the slaves value to the owner. But to subject the criminal to any punishment, the murder was to have been committed "of wantonness, or only of bloody mindedness or cruel intention:" and lest there should be any disposition to visit the crime too severely, it was specially enacted, that "if any Negro or other slave under punishment by his master or his order, for running away, *or any other crimes or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately shall suffer in life or member, which seldom happens, no person whatsoever shall be liable to any fine therefore.*"

felony. There seems every reason to believe that the council, or colonial house of lords, would gladly have assented to the proposition. But strange as it may appear to those who are unacquainted with West Indian prejudices, notwithstanding the time and manner in which the proposition was brought forward, the house of assembly absolutely refused to make the alteration.

If the bare statement of this fact must shock every liberal mind, how much will the shock be increased, when it is known under what circumstances it was that this refusal took place. For it had happened very recently, that several most wanton and atrocious murders had been committed on slaves; and some of them accompanied with circumstances of the most horrid and disgusting barbarity. Lord Seaforth felt all the horror likely to be produced by such incidents in a generous and feeling mind. He writes thus to Lord Camden, then the Secretary of State for the Colonies. "I inclose the Attorney-general's letter to me on the subject of the Negroes so most wantonly murdered. I am sorry to say, *several other instances of the same barbarity* have occurred, with which I have not troubled your Lordship, as I only wished to make you acquainted with the subject in general." It is due to Mr. Beccles, the Attorney-general, and to Mr. Coulthurst, the Advocate-general, to state, that they also felt and expressed themselves on the occasion just as persons in

the same rank of life would have done in this country. Lord Seaforth also thus described the official papers he transmitted, as to the murders he had mentioned in some former letters, "they are selected from *a great number*, among which there is not one in contradiction of the horrible facts. The truth is, that nothing has given me more trouble to get to the bottom of, than this business, *so horribly absurd are the prejudices of the people.* However, a great part of my object is answered by the alarm my interference has excited, and the attention it has called to the business. Bills are already proposed to make murder felony in both the council and the assembly, but I fear they will be thrown out for the present in the assembly: the council are unanimous on the side of humanity.* Lord Seaforth's prediction was but too fully

* The letter from the Attorney-general of Barbadoes to Lord Seaforth throws so much light on the popular feeling of the lower class of white men in Barbadoes, that it ought not to be suppressed, although it is a humiliating and disgusting recital:—"Extract of a letter from the Attorney-general of Barbadoes to the Governor of the Island:—"A Mr. ———, the manager of a plantation in the neighbourhood, had some months before purchased an African lad, who was much attached to his person, and slept in a passage contiguous to his chamber. On Sunday night there was an alarm of fire in the plantation, which induced Mr. ——— to go out hastily, and the next morning he missed the lad, who he supposed intended to follow him in the night, and had mistaken his way. He sent to his neighbours, and to Mr. C. among the rest, to inform them that his African lad had accidentally strayed from him;

verified; — the assembly threw out the bill, and the law against wilful murder remained in its pristine state.

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that he could not speak a word of English, and that possibly he might be found breaking canes, or taking something else for his support; in which case, he requested that they would not injure him, but return him, and he, Mr. ——— himself, would pay any damage he might have committed. A day or two after the owner of the boy was informed that Mr. C. and H. had killed a Negro in a neighbouring gully, and buried him there. He went to Mr. C. to inquire into the truth of the report, and intended to have the grave opened, to see whether it was his African lad. *Mr. C. told him, a Negro had been killed and buried there; but assured him it was not his, for he knew him very well, and he need not be at the trouble of opening the grave. Upon this the owner went away satisfied.* But receiving further information, which left no doubt upon his mind that it was his Negro, he returned, and opened the grave, and found it to be so. I was his leading counsel, and the facts stated in my brief were as follows: That C. and H. being informed that there was a Negro lurking in the gully, went armed with muskets, and took several Negro men with them. The poor African, seeing a parcel of men coming to attack him, was frightened; he took up a stone to defend himself, and retreated into a cleft rock, where they could not easily come at him: they then went for some trash, put it into the crevices of the rock behind him, and set it on fire: after it had burnt so as to scorch the poor fellow, he ran into a pool of water close by; they sent a Negro to bring him out, and he threw the stone at the Negro; upon which the two white men fired several times at him with the guns loaded with shot, and the Negroes pelted him with stones. He was at length dragged out of the pool in a dying condition, for he had not only received several bruises from the stones, but his breast was so pierced with the shot, that it was like a cullender. *The white savages ordered the Negroes to dig a grave, and whilst they were dig-*

I should be glad to be able to refer the conduct of the assembly, in this instance, altogether to the influence of the lower orders over their minds. This, doubtless, we may hope, had some

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... it, the poor creature made signs of begging for water, which was not given to him, but as soon as the grave was dug, he was thrown into it, and covered over; and there seems to be some doubt whether he was then quite dead. C and H. deny this but the owner assured me that he could prove it by more than one witness, and I have reason to believe it to be true, because on the day of trial C and H did not suffer the cause to come to a hearing, but paid the penalties and the costs of suit, which it is not supposed they would have done had they been innocent.

"I have the honour to be, &c.

The same transaction, with another far more dreadful murder in which there was a deliberate ingenuity of cruelty which almost exceeds belief, but of which I will spare my readers the recital, is related, with scarcely any variation as to circumstances, by the Advocate-General, who as well as the gentleman of whose estate the criminal was the manager, and who was at the time absent, expressed their most lively indignation against such horrid cruelty. It may be proper to remark that the story of the poor boy strikingly shews that such protection as the Negro slave occasionally receives from the laws, is too often to be ascribed rather to the master's care of his property, than to any more generous motive. The master, in this case, when he had only reason to believe that *a* Negro had been killed and buried out of the way, and not that it was his own slave, goes away at such. Is there a human being whom this country would have so done? Again it is a suggestion which the circumstances of the story enforce on us, that the crowd which was now collected, instead of being shocked at such barbarity, were the abettors of it, and then we hear the white savages, (as the Attorney-general justly styles them, order the Negroes who were present to dig a grave for their wretched country

share in producing the effect; though considering that in their circumstances it was peculiarly their duty to set the tone of public judgment and feeling to the bulk of the community, this would not be a very creditable plea. But it is due to truth to remark, that there is no hint to this effect in the papers laid before the House of Commons: on the contrary, in the Assembly's answer, there is an expression of resentment against the Governor, and an intimation of the danger of interfering between master and slave.

This incident will exhibit to every considerate reader a striking specimen of the state of the public mind in the West-Indies, at least so recently as 1805, in regard to the African race: and it may serve in some degree to shew the error into which we should fall, by conceiving that the bulk of the white population in our colonies, in estimating the proper conduct to be observed towards the slaves, would think and feel like ourselves. Even in this land of liberty and humanity, acts of atrocious cruelty have been perpetrated. We have heard of an apprentice being starved to death by her mistress; and, more recently, the British Governor of an African settlement caused the death of a soldier by exces-

man. They knew their state too well to refuse; and accordingly, with a promptitude of obedience which, with all our ideas of their sunk and prostrate spirits, must surprise us, they immediately executed the order.

sive punishment. But what was the effect on the public mind? In both cases, it was difficult to prevent the populace from anticipating the execution of the sentence of the law. In Barbadoes, on the contrary, the proposal to punish such enormities by more than a small fine, was just as unpopular as it would be in this country, to inflict a punishment which should be utterly disproportionate to the crime — such as hanging a man for petty larceny. Except among the highest and best educated classes, the natural sympathy was reversed; and the most horrible murders, some of them attended with circumstances too shocking for recital, instead of exciting any just commiseration for the Negro race, had actually worked in the opposite direction. And is it to assemblies subject to the influence of such popular prejudices as these, and sitting in the bosom of such communities, that we can commit the temporal and eternal interests of many hundred thousands of these despised fellow creatures?

If this case itself suggests to us a useful distrust of the colonial assemblies, in what relates to the Negroes, the sequel of it will not perhaps be less useful in enabling us to judge of their probable conduct, even when they may profess a disposition to conform to our wishes. Whether it was that the influence of the higher members of the Barbadoes community worked at last upon the minds of the assembly, or that the effect likely to be produced in the English Parliament led

to a change of conduct, so it was that the assembly ultimately gave way, and it was supposed, that by the new law of Barbadoes, no less than by that of the other islands, the wilful murder of a slave was made a capital offence. Such, indeed, was the statement made afterwards by more than one advocate for the West Indians, in the controversy in 1816, concerning the Registry Bill; and the abolitionists were reproached with having referred to a period when the law had been different, as if it had been of an antiquated date. Yet, when the statute book itself was examined, (which, I confess, not doubting the accuracy of the statement, I did not look into for several years,) it was found that the alleged reformation of the law is highly problematical at least, if not clearly and totally evasive; for instead of simply declaring the well-defined crime of wilful murder to be a capital felony when perpetrated on a slave, the enacting words are, "if any person shall hereafter wilfully, *maliciously*, *wantonly*, and WITHOUT PROVOCATION kill and murder any slave, &c." If, hereafter, any of those "*White Savages*," so justly termed such by the Attorney-general of Barbadoes, in wreaking their vengeance on the wretched subjects of their tyranny, should actually murder any of their slaves, or the slaves of others, would there be a hope, even if all the scarcely superable obstacles arising from the absolute rejection of Negro testimony were to be overcome, of a conviction

under the terms of this act? What offender could be unable to prove, to the satisfaction of a Barbadoes jury, that there had been *some provocation?* Yet this is the amended, — this, I suppose, the ameliorating law passed in April, 1805, entitled, "An act for *the better protection* of the slaves of this island."*

Surely, with these and the many other evidences we have had of the state of mind respecting Negroes, which prevails in the Colonies, we should be more culpable than they, if we were still to commit implicitly to their legislatures the task of devising and carrying into execution such physical and moral reforms as humanity demands in the slavery of the West Indies. More culpable; I say it advisedly; for, though it is no praise to us, but to the good providence of God, we are exempt from the influence of the harsh prejudices to which they, in some degree by our concurrent fault, have been subjected.

The information also which we now possess, as to the African character, would aggravate our criminality. For though the day, I trust, is gone by for ever, in which the alleged inferiority of intellect and incurable barbarity of the African race were supposed to extenuate their oppression, yet it ought not to be left unnoticed, that the notions which formerly prevailed to their prejudice, in these respects, have of late

* See papers entitled Colonial Laws respecting Slaves, 1788 — 1815, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 5th April, 1816.

years been abundantly refuted, not only by authority but experience. It may be confidently affirmed, that there never was any uncivilised people of whose dispositions we have received a more amiable character than that which is given of the native Africans by Parke and Golberry, both of whom visited those districts of Africa from which victims for the Slave Trade were furnished; and whose testimony in their favour will naturally be admitted with less reserve, because neither of them could be biassed by any wish to discountenance the Slave Trade, they having evidently felt no desire for its abolition.

But it is at Sierra Leone, that long despised and calumniated colony, that the African character has been most effectually and experimentally vindicated. The first seeds of civilization which were sown there by the Christian philanthropy of Mr. Granville Sharpe nearly perished from the unkindly soil to which they had been committed, but they were saved from early destruction, and cultured at length successfully, under the fostering care and indefatigable attention of the late excellent Mr. H: Thornton, and by other good and able men, who, both at home and in the colony, co-operated with him; by one living benefactor especially, who will be hereafter venerated as the steady, enlightened, and unwearied, though unostentatious friend of Africa. It is at Sierra Leone, that the great experiment on human nature has

been tried; and there it has appeared, that the poor African barbarians, just rescued from the holds of slave-ships, are capable, not merely of being civilized, but of soon enjoying, with advantage, the rights and institutions of British freemen. In truth, to have formed any conclusions against the Negroes from the experience we had of them in their state of bondage, was not less unphilosophical than unjust. It was remarked by M. Dupuis, the British consul at Mogadore, that even the generality of European Christians, after a long captivity and severe treatment among the Arabs, appeared at first exceedingly stupid and insensible. "If," he adds, "they have been any considerable time in slavery, they appear lost to reason and feeling; their spirits broken, and their faculties sunk in a species of stupor, which I am unable adequately to describe. They appear degraded even below the Negro slave. The succession of hardships, without any protecting law to which they can appeal for any alleviation or redress, seems to destroy every spring of exertion or hope in their minds. They appear indifferent to every thing around them; abject, servile, and brutish."*

If the native intelligence and buoyant independence of Britons cannot survive in the dank and baleful climate of personal slavery, could it be reasonably expected that the poor

* See Quarterly Review for January 7. 1816.—Article, *Tombuctoo.*

Africans, unsupported by any consciousness of personal dignity or civil rights, should not yield to the malignant influences to which they had so long been subjected, and be depressed even below the level of the human species? But at Sierra Leone, they have resumed the stature and port of men, and have acquired, in an eminent degree, the virtues of the citizen and the subject. Witness the peace, and order, and loyalty which have generally prevailed in this colony, in a remarkable degree; especially under the present excellent Governor, Sir Charles Macarthy. Still more, these recent savages, having become the subjects of religious and moral culture, have manifested the greatest willingness to receive instruction, and made a practical proficiency in Christianity, such as might put Europeans to the blush. Not only have they learned with facility the principles of the Christian faith; but they have shewn, by their mutual kindnesses, and by the attachment and gratitude to their worthy pastors and superintendents, that they have derived from their knowledge of Christianity its moral and practical fruits.

The same testimony as to the progress of the Negro children, in common school learning, has been given by all the masters who have instructed them in the Island of Hayti; and the missionaries, in our different West Indian islands, testify, with one consent, the gratitude and attachment which the West Indian, no less than

the Sierra Leone Negroes feel to those who condescend to become their teachers.

Again, the impression so assiduously attempted heretofore to be made, that the *indolence* of the Negro race was utterly incurable, and that without the driving whip they never would willingly engage in agricultural labour, has been shewn to be utterly without foundation. Mr. Parke relates, that the Africans, when prompted by any adequate motives, would work diligently and perseveringly both in agricultural and manufacturing labours. And there is on the African coast a whole nation of the most muscular men and the hardiest labourers, who, from their known industry, are hired both for government service, and by the European traders, as workmen, both on ship-board and on shore.

Nor have instances of a similar kind been wanting even in the West Indies, whenever circumstances have been at all favourable to voluntary industry. Since the dissolution of the black corps, (a measure which the abolitionists are scarcely, I fear, excusable for not having opposed, though prompted to acquiesce in it by unwillingness to thwart, when not indispensably necessary, the prejudices of the colonists) many of the disbanded soldiers have maintained themselves by their own agricultural labours, and have manifested a degree of industry that ought to have silenced for ever all imputations on the diligence of their race.

But another still more striking instance has been lately afforded in Trinidad. There many hundreds of American Negroes, at the close of the late unhappy war with the United States, were, by the humane policy of Sir Ralph Woodford, received into Trinidad, to the no small alarm of the planters. These were slaves enfranchised by desertion, yet instead of becoming a nuisance to the community by idleness and dissolute manners, as prejudice loudly foretold, they have maintained themselves well, in various ways, by their own industry and prudence. Many of them have worked as hired labourers for the planters with so much diligence and good conduct, that they are now universally regarded as a valuable acquisition to the colony; and it is supposed, that a large addition to their number would be very gladly received.

Are all these important lessons to be read to us without producing any influence on our minds? Ought they not to enforce on us, as by a voice from heaven, that we have been most cruelly and inexcusably degrading, to the level of brutes, those whom the Almighty had made capable of enjoying our own civil blessings in this world, not less clearly than he has fitted them to be heirs of our common immortality?

But while we are loudly called on by justice and humanity to take measures without delay for improving the condition of our West Indian slaves, self-interest also inculcates the same duty, and with full as clear a voice. It is a great

though common error, that notwithstanding we must, on religious and moral grounds, condemn the West Indian system, yet, that in a worldly view, it has been eminently gainful both to individuals and to the community at large. On the contrary, I believe it might be proved to any inquiring and unprejudiced mind, that taking in all considerations of political economy, and looking to the lamenable waste of human life among our soldiers and seamen, raised and recruited at a great expence, as well as to the more direct pecuniary charge of protecting the sugar colonies, no system of civil polity was ever maintained at a greater price, or was less truly profitable either to individuals or to the community, than that of our West Indian settlements. Indeed, it would have been a strange exception to all those established principles which Divine Providence has ordained for the moral benefit of the world, if national and personal prosperity were generally and permanently to be found to arise from injustice and oppression. There may be individual instances of great fortunes amassed by every species of wrong doing. A course, ruinous in the long run, may, to an individual, or for a time, appear eminently profitable; nevertheless, it is unquestionably true, that the path of prosperity rarely diverges long and widely from that of integrity and virtue; or, to express it in a familiar adage, —that honesty is the best policy.

It ought not to be necessary to assert such

principles as these in an age in which it has been incontrovertibly established by the soundest of our political economists, — that the base and selfish, though plausible views, which formerly prevailed so widely among statesmen, and taught them to believe that the prosperity and elevation of their country would be best promoted by the impoverishment and depression of its neighbours, were quite fallacious; and when we have now learned the opposite and beneficent lesson, — that every nation is, in fact, benefited by the growing affluence of others, and that all are thus interested in the well-being and improvement of all. At such an enlightened period as this, when commerce herself adopts the principles of true morality, and becomes liberal and benevolent, will it be believed that the Almighty has rendered the depression and misery of the cultivators of the soil in our West Indian colonies necessary, or even conducive, to their prosperity and safety? No, surely! The oppression of these injured fellow-creatures, however it may be profitable in a few instances, can never be generally politic; and in the main, and ultimately, the comfort of the labourer, and the well-being of those who have to enjoy the fruits of his labour, will be found to be coincident.

As for the apprehensions of ruin, expressed by the West Indians, from the instruction and moral improvement of their slaves, or from the interference of the Imperial Legislature, we have been taught by experience in the Slave

Trade controversy, that their apprehensions are not always reasonable, either in degree, or in the objects to which they are directed. How confidently did all the Slave Traders predict their own ruin, together with that of the West Indies, and also of the town of Liverpool, from the regulations of the bill for limiting the number of slaves to be taken in ships of given dimensions, while the trade should be tolerated, and for requiring certain particulars of food and medical attendance! yet, after a few years, the regulations were allowed, not merely to be harmless, but to have been positively and greatly beneficial. The total ruin of the sugar colonies was still more confidently foretold by the planters, the assemblies, and their agents, by their parliamentary advocates, and the West Indian committee, as a sure consequence of abolishing the Slave Trade; and yet there is not, I believe, an intelligent West Indian who will not now confess, that it would have been greatly for the benefit of all our old colonies, if the Slave Trade had been abolished many years sooner; and that if it had continued some years longer, it must have completed their destruction.

Mr. Dundas, in 1792, did not hesitate to ridicule the vain terrors of the parties whose battle he was fighting, and, by their own selection, as their commander-in-chief, though emancipation itself was the object. In illustration of the apprehensions which many entertained of the

consequences of changing their slaves into free labourers, he stated that some years before, in certain districts of Scotland, the persons who laboured in the salt-works and coal-mines were actually slaves; and that a proposal being made to emancipate them, instantly the owners of the works came forward, declaring that if their vassals were to be raised to the condition of free labourers, they themselves would be utterly ruined; for that such was the peculiarity, such the unpleasant nature of those species of labours, that they could not depend on hired service, as in other instances. "But at length," added Mr. Dundas, "the good sense of the age obtained the victory. — The salters and colliers were changed into free labourers, and all the terrors of the owners ended in smoke."

While thus alive to imaginary dangers, or rather while thus assiduous in endeavouring to inspire alarm in the mother country, to prevent her listening to the claims of justice and mercy, our planters appear blind to the new and real dangers that are accumulating around them. Providence graciously seems to allow them a golden interval, which, duly improved, might prevent the dreadful explosion that may otherwise be expected. But they neglect it with a supineness and insensibility resembling infatuation. With a community of near 800,000 free blacks, many of them accustomed to the use of arms, within sight of the greatest of our West Indian islands; with a slave population in Cuba

and Porto Rico, which has been of late so fearfully augmented with imported Africans, as, according to all received principles, to produce, even in pacific times, and much more in the present æra of transatlantic convulsions, the utmost extremity of danger; with the example afforded in many of the United States, and in almost all the new republics of South America, where Negro slavery has been recently abolished, — is this a time, are these the circumstances, in which it can be wise and safe, if it were even honest and humane, to keep down in their present state of heathenish and almost brutish degradation, the 800,000 Negroes in our West Indian colonies? Here, indeed, is danger, if we observe the signs of the times, whether we take our lesson from the history of men, or form our conclusions from natural reason or from the revealed will of God.

But raise these poor creatures from their depressed condition, and if they are not yet fit for the enjoyment of British freedom, elevate them at least from the level of the brute creation into that of rational nature — dismiss the driving whip, and thereby afford place for the developement of the first rudiments of civil character — implant in them the principle of hope — let free scope be given for their industry, and for their rising in life by their personal good conduct — give them an interest in defending the community to which they belong — teach them that lesson which Chris-

tianity can alone truly inculcate, that the present life is but a short and uncertain span, to which will succeed an eternal existence of happiness or misery — inculcate on them, on the authority of the sacred page, that the point of real importance is not what is the rank or the station men occupy, but how they discharge the duties of life — how they use the opportunities they may enjoy of providing for their everlasting happiness. Taught by Christianity, they will sustain with patience the sufferings of their actual lot, while the same instructress will rapidly prepare them for a better; and instead of being objects at one time of contempt, and at another of terror, (a base and servile passion, which too naturally degenerates into hatred,) they will be soon regarded as a grateful peasantry, the strength of the communities in which they live, — of which they have hitherto been the weakness and the terror, sometimes the mischief and the scourge.

To the real nature of the West Indian system, and still more to the extent of its manifold abuses, the bulk even of well-informed men in this country are, I believe, generally strangers. May it not be from our having sinned in ignorance that we have so long been spared? But ignorance of a duty which we have had abundant means of knowing to be such, can by no one be deemed excusable. Let us not presume too far on the forbearance of the Almighty. Favoured in an unequalled degree with Christian light,

with civil freedom, and with a greater measure of national blessings than perhaps any other country upon earth ever before enjoyed, what a return would it be for the goodness of the Almighty, if we were to continue to keep the descendants of the Africans, whom we have ourselves wrongfully planted in the western hemisphere, in their present state of unexampled darkness and degradation!

While efforts are making to rescue our country from this guilt and this reproach, let every one remember that he is answerable for any measure of assistance which Providence has enabled him to render towards the accomplishment of the good work. In a country in which the popular voice has a powerful and constitutional influence on the government and legislation, to be silent when there is a question of reforming abuses repugnant to justice and humanity, is to share their guilt. Power always implies responsibility; and the possessor of it cannot innocently be neutral, when by his exertion moral good may be promoted, or evil lessened or removed.

If I may presume to employ a few words on what belongs more particularly to the writer of these lines, I can truly declare, that an irresistible conviction that it is his positive duty to endeavour to rouse his countrymen to a just sense of the importance and urgency of our duties towards the Negro Slaves, has alone compelled him reluctantly thus to come forward

again in such an arduous cause as this, and at a period of life when nature shrinks from a laborious contest.* He can but too surely anticipate from experience, that the grossest and most unfounded calumnies will be profusely poured out against him; but he nevertheless proceeds, animated by the wish, and, he will add, the confident hope, that the cause of our African brethren will deeply interest the public mind, and that the legislature will be induced to adopt the course prescribed to us by the strongest obligations of moral and religious duty.

Before I conclude, may I presume to interpose a word of caution to my fellow-labourers in this great cause, — a caution which I can truly say I have ever wished myself to keep in remembrance, and observe in practice: it is, that while we expose and condemn the evils of the system itself, we should treat with candour and tenderness the characters of the West Indian proprietors. Let not the friends of the Africans forget that they themselves might have inherited West Indian property; and that by early example and habit they might have been subjected to the very prejudices which they now condemn. I have before declared, and I now willingly repeat, that I sincerely believe many of the owners of West Indian estates to be men of more than common kindness and liberality; but I myself have found many of them, as I have had every reason to believe, utterly unacquainted with the true nature and practical character of the system with

which they have the misfortune to be connected.

While, however, we speak and act towards the colonists personally with fair consideration and becoming candour, let our exertions in the cause of the unfortunate slaves be zealous and unremitting. Let us act with an energy suited to the importance of the interests for which we contend. Justice, humanity, and sound policy prescribe our course, and will animate our efforts. Stimulated by a consciousness of what we owe to the laws of God and the rights and happiness of man, our exertions will be ardent, and our perseverance invincible. Our ultimate success is sure; and 'ere long we shall rejoice in the consciousness of having delivered our country from the greatest of her crimes, and rescued her character from the deepest stain of dishonour.

THE END.

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